## THE CHURCH OF GOD:

OR,

## E S S A Y S

UPON SOME DESCRIPTIVE

## NAMES AND TITLES,

GIVEN IN THE SCRIPTURES,

BY

GOD THE HOLY GHOST,

TO THE

GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF ALL TRUE BELIEVERS

IN

GOD THE SON,

OR THE

GOD-MAN JESUS CHRIST,

AND DENOTING

THE NATURE AND MEANS OF THEIR SALVATION,

THROUGH

THE EVERLASTING COVENANT.

MADE BY

#### GOD THE FATHER

WITH THOSE DIVINE PERSONS IN

THE ONE JEHOVAH.

GLORIOUS THINGS ARE SPOKEN OF THEE, O CITY OF GOD.

THE CALLED THE

THE GATES OF HELL SHALL NOT PREVAIL AGAINST IT.
MATT. XVI. 18.

#### London :

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MAY 6, 1793.

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## THE CHURCH OF GOD, &c.

## CHURCH.

AS it is confessedly necessary, in all human sciences, to fettle the precise sense of the terms used in them, in order to obtain an accurate knowledge of their feveral fubiects; so is this rule more especially proper, though perhaps less attended to, in divinity, and in the word or revelation of God, which is the only fure foundation of divinity, and which, particularly in one of its languages, has a peculiarity of allusion, and precision of expression, not to be met with in any other book or language in the world. knowledge of the original terms, and due confideration of their usage, would not only afford a just key to the stores of divine erudition, sufficiently ample, even in this present life, to reward the study and pursuit of the truth-seeking mind; but would also defend it from a thousand errors and false principles, by a direct manifestation of their fallacy, and

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an almost immediate detection of their pernicious tendency, to the understanding and the heart at once. Without it, people not only lofe a very high fatisfaction and delight, but must unavoidably take a great deal upon trust, and are therefore neither so good judges of what they profess to believe, nor so capable of defending it, in many respects, from attacks, formed either by the ignorance or the enmity of adversaries. And it may be believed in candor, that if fome perfons, hostile to divine revelation, could really have read their bibles, without the help of others; they would have found many, if not all their objections obviated, and truth itself exhibited in her most perfect form; commanding at least their respect, if not, for their own happiness, a more entire attention. At any rate, it is neither just nor liberal to censure a book, which a man is unable to read. A clown, all English, would be esteemed a very incompetent scholiast upon Virgil or Homer.

And yet it must be owned, that though a man hath attained the language of the bible, and hath acquired a key to much treasure; he may still want the master-key, which only can unlock the interior depository of the most precious stores; or, in other words, in order to attain for himself the most interesting matters in the sacred volume, it is necessary for him to have a better tuition than his own, or that of any creatures; lest otherwise, he fall into the

case of those, who are ever learning, and never able to come to the knowledge of the truth. He will, however, be probably preserved from many gross heterodoxies, from many anti-christian absurdities, and from the effects of many perverse disputings of men of corrupt minds and destitute of the truth, by the verbal knowledge and literal study of the book and its subjects; as might be instanced at this time in several valuable persons, who seem to have obtained what they hold of truth, and to have been preferved from the reigning errors, in no other way. It is a great fatisfaction to fee people go thus far: it would be a matter of exceeding joy to find them clearly in the strait and narrow road, without doubt or wavering, owning and enjoying the full grace and glory of the gospel of Christ.

The terms of Scripture, the very names of persons and things in God's own language, contain in them the doctrines and principles of the most momentous truths; not with metaphyfical subtleties, not for logical deductions, as in common books, not for acute or wordy reasonings; but by authoritative communication and express declaration from God himself, commanding affent with refentment in case of unbelief, who spake by his Spirit at sundry times and in divers manners to the fathers by the prophets. The words used, therefore, do not stand for abstract speculations or lead to fine-spun theories, to be excogitated by us;

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but imply living, interesting, eternal realities. They were not intended to convey notions, for the corrupt investigation of man's doubtful and doubting reason, or (what the Scripture calls) his darkened understanding; but for the explicit conveyance of positive truths-of truths fo important, as to contain in them the interests of the human being to all eternity-of truths fo needful, that the human being cannot be happy without them either here or hereafter, For the enjoyment of these he is to yield the abedience of faith, or to give absolute credit to the veracity of his Maker; whose aclos son, or direct instruction, it is neither poor-spirited nor absurd implicitly to receive; but, on the contrary, arrogant and presumptuous to reject, only because, from the weakness of human intellection, it is not in all cases possible, and especially without some previous growth in grace, to comprehend or explain it.

As a man is reputed a scholar, in proportion as he knows words and things, and words chiefly as leading to the knowledge of things; so a professor of religion is to be reckoned a true divine, or indeed a real Christian, only as he understands the terms and language of divine truth, and the things revealed or signified by those terms; all of which are explicit and clear, as coming from God himself, and sweet and powerful by whomsoever they are truly received, both in doctrine and experience.

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Upon the subject-matter of this treatife, which confiders many of the NAMES or TITLES, given in the Scriptures to those whom God has declared to be the objects of his favor, it seems proper to say, That it is the author's general intention to shew from these names, that they not only relate to the persons of those objects of divine favor, but also (agreeable to what has now been premised) to certain dostrines or princibles, which shew the means, the order, the privileges, which the divine Wisdom hath used in their behalf, or conferred upon them, and which, for the information and comfort of their minds, God devised and ordained the titles and terms to express and declare. The name which God gives must be right; and the sense, or doctrine of the name, must as necessarily be true. To take away the meaning of the name, would be to destroy God's purpose in giving it: and to allow the meaning (it may be feen, as we go along) will be to allow all the leading or effential principles, which concern man's present peace and eternal falvation.

Having suggested these sew restections, which may serve as an introduction to the purpose of the following papers; we will now consider one of the most conspicuous and comprehensive titles which God hath bestowed upon his redeemed, in the word

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CHURCH,

#### CHURCH.

THE etymological fense of this English name church, from the Greek Kugis oinia or nugiany oinia (whence Kirk, Kerke,) is the Lord's house, or house fet apart for the Lord's worship. It is somewhat more than the proseuchæ, which were sometimes small structures, and fometimes places in the open air, appointed for prayer; but differs little, as to the intention, from the fynagogues among the Jews, which were large and convenient buildings, appropriated to the reading of the law and the offering up of public devotions. But the word, though it frequently denotes the building, is also used to fignify the persons affembling in it for the purpose abovementioned: hence, by an easy figure, the congregation became fynonimous with church. In this fense also, by a more antient usage, the word שדה, which literally means an affembly, fometimes implies the fame with אחף, a particular set called out of a general bulk, and fo diffinguished from them. In short, the word church is applied to many fenses. Sometimes it is used to denote the general body of men, good and bad, profeffing Christianity; fometimes a particular nation of the fame profession\*; fometimes the pastors of the

<sup>\*</sup> Thus the Church of England, of Scotland, &c. So the modern Jews distinguish between their Church of Spain, and that of Germany.

church in convocation or fynod; fometimes the people, in distinction from the ministers; sometimes the place, where they meet to worship; sometimes a very sew persons indeed; a family in a house; or, if we may follow Tertullian, three laymen, met for worship, may make a church\*; sometimes God's own spiritual people on earth, or church truly militant against the powers of evil and darkness; and sometimes the assembly of just men made persect, or church triumphant, in heaven +.

But the great idea of the word church, to which all the other fenses only minister or are subordinate, must be taken from the words of and Exadnota, which primarily signify persons specially CALLED OUT OF or CHOSEN from the common mass of the world or people for a particular purpose: and these words, applied to the children of God, denote that they are a people peculiarly appointed and called of God, out of the bulk of mankind, to be his own portion and to obtain ever-

† The learned reader may fee much upon the various usages of the word Church in Selden de Synedr.

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<sup>\*</sup> Ubi tres, ecclefia est, licet laici. TERTUL. Exhort. ad cast. See HOOKER. Eccl. Pol. B. iii. § 1. Our Lord justifies this affertion, by affuring his people, that where two or three are gathered together in his name, there is he in the midst of them. And it is not doubted, but that a church of Christ was walking to Emmaus, when our Lord joined himself to two of his disciples upon the road thither and preached to them.

lasting salvation, by the means which he has appointed and affords them, according to the good pleasure of his will. In this view, the word Church doth not specify the number or proportion, but the peculiarity and the persons, of the Lord's redeemed; be they more or sewer, in contradistinction from the men of the world. Christ loved this church, and gave himself for it, that he might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water, by the word, that he (as the man high-priest) might present it to himself (in Jehovah) a glorious church, not having spot or wrinkle, or any such thing (like outward churches or mixed congregations of men) but that it should be holy, and without blemish \*.

In this view of the word church, the apostle calls the brethren of his own time, partakers of the HEAVENLY CALLING; which, in another place, he terms the HIGH CALLING of God in Christ Jesus;. He speaks often of God's calling or vocation, in this particular view, as an act of God's free will and power, and not man's; and hence calling and election, which are put together by another apostle §, are names nearly signifying in effect the same thing. His effectual calling proceeds from his own election, and is the manifested confirmation of it. This the

<sup>\*</sup> Eph. v. 25, 26, 27. † Hebr. iii. 1. † Phil. iii. 14 § 2 Pet. i. 10.

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apostle shews very remarkably: ye fee your CALLING, brethren; how that not many wife men after the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble, are called. But God hath CHOSEN, or ELECTED, the foolish things of the world, to confound the wife; and God hath CHOSEN the weak things of the world, to confound the things which are mighty; and base things of the world, and things which are despised, hath God CHOSEN, yea and things which are not, to bring to neught things that are; that no flesh should glory in his presence\*. There could be no reason for the choice and the calling, but God's own free grace and determination; for the subjects of his choice were altogether unlikely and unworthy. There is also a general calling by the word, as there is a general church, to all forts and of all forts; but this is not the particular and energetic call, which the Holy Spirit gives in the use of the word, to his own people, when he graciously quickens them from spiritual death. The former is appointed to men, who are to go forth into all the world with the unlimited commission of preaching the gospel to every creature, which is their bufiness, without regarding distinction of persons: the latter is reserved in God's own hand, who knoweth whom he hath chosen, and to whom he will effectuate the word preached, distin-

\* Cor. i 26---29.

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guishing and selecting them from the mass of the world. Thus many are CALLED; but, few, CHOSEN.

Of these the Jews of old were ordained to be a firiking figure, preaching the awful and important truth before us \*. Thus faid Moses to them: thou art a holy (or separate) people unto Jehovah thy Alehim: Jehovah thy Alehim hath chosen thee to be (to have a particular existence as) a special people unto himself, above all the people that are upon the face of the earth. Jehovah did not fet his love upon you, nor choose you, because ye were more in number than any people (for ye were the fewest of all people) but BE-CAUSE Jehovah loved (or would love) you, and because he would keep the oath, &c. . Hence they are called, the people whom Jehovah purchased as a peculiar treasure unto him above all people t. These were fo on a conditional covenant, which, as a figure, was to pass away; but the spiritual church or people upon an unconditional covenant, which, as the fubstance intended, was to remain for ever. The one covenant, therefore, was called old, as relative to a former or fore-running people, who were, like it, to

† Deut. vii. 6, &c. ‡ Exod. xv. 16. xix. 5.

<sup>\*</sup> It is to be regretted, that this great and most important figure, which denotes who and what is properly the church of God, is omitted by the excellent and learned author of a late valuable work, On the sigurative Language of the Scriptures.

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be taken away; but the other is called new, because it was to be revealed in due time from under the shadow of the old, and to be ever-new, as is the perpetual song of the blessed, or everlassing. The terms of this new covenant are, I [Jehovah] will put my law in their inward parts, and write it in their hearts; and WILL BE their Alehim, and THEY SHALL BE my people \*.

The apostle applies this to the spiritual or redeemed people, both Jews and Gentiles. He fays, that the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ gave himself for us, that he might redeem us from all iniquity, and PURIFY UNTO HIMSELF A PECULIAR PEOPLE, zealous of good works . The purification was by the blood of Jesus, as the Jews were typically purified by facrifice under the law, prefiguring this very mercy. For this cause (says the apostle) he is the Mediator of the new Testament (or covenant,) that by means of death (i. e. his death) for the redemption (or perfect clearing away) of the transgressions under the first testament, they who are CALLED [i. e. the spiritual church] might receive the promise of eternal inheritance t. From what has been faid, it may appear, that the church of Christ is two-fold; the one that outward and visible church, which professes di-

<sup>\*</sup> Jer. xxxi. 33. ‡ Heb. ix. 15.

<sup>†</sup> Tit. ii. 14.

vine truth and offers public worship; the other that spiritual assemblage of persons in all ages, who constitute the mystic body of Christ, and are chosen and called to this high privilege by the Father and Holy Spirit. They are not, however, two churches totally different from each other in members; but the latter is raifed out of the former, as the kernel out of the shell, and is the church emphatically, to which both what is called the vifible church and the world itself do only minister and subserve. This is that falt of the earth, which keeps it, for a time appointed, from all the consequences of corruption. There is indeed another church (if it may deserve the name) called by the wife man the congregation of the dead, (Prov. xxi. 16.) apostates, rebels, or giants (as the word fignifies) in their own wisdom and ftrength; fuch as were those we read of in Gen. vi. 4. and Ecclus. xxiii. 4. These follow Cain and Balaam for the earth and its rewards, and have no spiritual alliance whatever with the Ifrael of God.

The spiritually and effectually CALLED of God are the CHOSEN of God; and called, because they are chosen. Thus chosen, called, and faithful, they constitute the one holy Church of God\*, in the sub-

<sup>\*</sup> To this effect is the fense of a most learned defender of the church of England. "That church of Christ, which we properly term his body mystical, can be but one; neither can that one be fensibly discerned by any man, inasmuch as the parts thereof are some

lime sense; and are therefore said, what can be said truly of no others, to be IN God the Father and in the Lord Jesus Christ\*. They are IN God by a mystical and spiritual union with the person of their Redeemer, by whom alone they have this wonderful access by one Spirit to the Father.

The ark of Noah shadowed forth the church in the world, selected and preserved from general destruction, borne up over the waves and oppositions of ungodly men and evil spirits, and landed safely at last upon God's holy mountain.

The ark of the covenant, resting in the most holy place, described in a figure the church in glory, covered by Christ her only propitiation, and cloathed with the pure gold of his perfect righteousness. As Noah's ark resembled the church militant, being

in heaven already with Christ, and the rest that are on earth (albeit their natural persons be visible) we do not discern under this property whereby they are truly and infallibly of that body. Only our minds, by intellectual conceit, are able to apprehend, that such a real body there is; a body collective, because it containeth an huge multitude; a body mystical, because the mystery of their conjunction is removed altogether from sense. Whatsoever we read in scripture concerning the end ess love, and the saving mercy, which God sheweth towards his church; the only pr per subject thereof is this church. Concerning this si ck it is, that our Lord and Saviour hath promised, I give unto them eternal life, and they shall never perish, neither shall any pluck them out of my hands." Hooker. Eccl. Pol. B. iii. §. I.

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agitated here upon the troublesome waves of the world; so the other ark exhibited the church triumphant in the rest of God, and therefore received its name from the exultation and joy, which the saints in glory pour forth before the throne of the Highest.

Out of the ark of *Noah*, there was no escape or deliverance: Out of the church of Christ, or not being a member of it, there will be found at the last no salvation.

The outward and visible church, with its outward and visible signs, was instituted for the collection and instruction of those, who, by the means and calling used in it, compose, when completed in one body, that inward and invisible church, which receives, through the signs, the inward and spiritual grace. All others, "being void of a lively faith," though they use the signs, find no "wholesome effect or operation" from them, "nor are they partakers of Christ in any wise," but rather fall into "condemnation" thereby.

The outward church hath the means of grace; but the spiritual church only hath grace itself and the end of grace. God hath appointed the one as a step to the other: and, by being partaker of the last, the Christian knows how to estimate and be thankful for the first. He will pray and endeavour for its extension and support, in the establishment of its ordinances and ministers, that God's sheep, wandering in the world, may be brought into the fold, and that their "number may be accomplished."

The visible church consists, and necessarily must consist in this world, of good and bad, and probably at all times of more bad than good: but the invisible church of Christ, gathered from the visible church universal, and from the beginning of man to the end of time, is made up wholly and solely of true believers, who, though they may differ in their proportions, have all the same grace, and one, common, undivided, interest in the salvation of Jesus Christ.

The outward church hath often been rent with factions and fchifms, and defiled by errors, through the cunning craftiness of men, who lie in wait to deceive, either for vain glory or for filthy lucre's fake. These pretend reason, and liberty, and unlimited discussion; forgetting, that where God hath given the data or principles, man is bound to implicit obedience, whatever conduct he may espouse in ordinary matters; and therefore the refult is, first doubt, then prefumption, then error, and, lastly, open disobedience. The foundest visible churches have ever had, more or less of these " eye-fores and blemishes in their continual attendants about the fervice of God's fanctuary—who live by religion, and are, for recompence in fine, the death of the nurse that feedeth them\*." Such was the case and ruin of the churches

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<sup>\*</sup> HOOKER. Eccl. Pol. B. v. § 81.

in Asia; and such of the Jewish church itself. Perhaps, no visible church ever was or will be so surely or effectually ruined, as by the salse doctrine and gross misconduct of its own rulers and members. One enemy within the walls is worse and more dangerous than sifty soes, who attack from without. But the inward church is preserved, in the arms and bosom of Christ, from the danger of these calamities. She doth not, she cannot, finally and essentially err; Christ himself hath pronounced it to be impossible \*: and the gates of hell shall never prevail against her; for the part on earth is brought forward and kept by the power of God himself through faith unto salvation; and the part in heaven is certainly delivered from the very approaches of mistake and of evil.

The outward church of Christ upon earth shall remain, as the scassfold for the building, till every member of the spiritual church shall be gathered in or sitted for its place; and then the head-stone shall be brought forth with shoutings of, Grace, Grace, unto it. Then shall all these present things, having no purpose for which they can remain, be dissolved; and in one hour + of that day of the Lord which will come as a thief in the night, assonishing a thoughtless and giddy world as the flood of Noah, shall the heavens, being on sire, pass away with a great noise, and the elements

<sup>\*</sup> Matt. xxiv. 24. with John x. 27, 28.

<sup>†</sup> Rev. xviii. 10, 19.

melt with fervent heat; the earth also, and the works that are therein, all the cares, labors, contrivances, and hopes of men, shall be burnt up \*. Thus spake the Holy Ghost by the apostle; and long before he revealed the same, in his call to the children of God, by the prophet. Lift up your eyes to the heavens, and look upon the earth beneath: for the heaven shall vanish away like smoke, and the earth shall wax old like a garment, and they that dwell therein shall die in like manner; but my salvation shall be for ever, and my righteousness shall not be abolished †.

How desirous are mortals of continuance? how eager for the very shadow of immortality?—for a continuance, even in this state of misery and corruption:—for an immortality, supposed to be possible only in the future thought and opinions of dying men!—for the useless immortality of an empty name! But alas! these very same mortals; how indifferent are they to God's own promise and assurance of an eternal inheritance and abiding, and of a name, an everlasting name that shall not be cut off; which stands in the love and plaudit of innumerable beings, of the highest rank, holiness, and understanding in the whole creation, and even of God himself; and concerning that immortality, which consists in the unalterable enjoyment of

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<sup>\* 2</sup> Pet. iii. 10--12.

<sup>†</sup> Isaiah li. 6.

every perfection without end! This may be wifdom, at least they act as if it were wisdom, in their own esteem; but in the fight of God, and proportionally in the view of every mind enlightened and alive, it is madness, melancholy, and misery; verging towards and at last plunged in a gulph of unchangeable perpetuity beyond redemption. If we would fee one of the most striking instances of the infatuation of fin, one of the most forcible proofs of the depth of the human fall; here it is, A creature, capable of the enjoyment of God and eternal happiness, deceived, befotted, and carried away from it, and also from every intrinsic good here upon earth, into the dregs of evil; feeking death in the fluctuating vanity \* and palpable errors of life, and boldly spurning at those very things, which alone can answer the purpose of his being and make him happy! He wanders wide through the world for that peace and fafety, which no wanderer, as fuch, ever found. Satan and Cain have gone to and fro in the earth, and walked up and down in it +, under the curse of being fugitives and vagabonds t, but never attained fatiety or rest; and the fame may be faid of all, that follow them. In the ark, in the city, in the church, of God, must men enter in spirit and in truth; or the world and

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<sup>\*</sup> Prov. xxi. 6. + Job i. 7. 

‡ Gen. iv. 12.

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their own bosoms, were there no enemies beside, will be leading them down from woe to woe, till they enter the dark and hopeless caverns of death eternal.

Reader! Art thou in this church of the living God?-I ask not, whether thou art of any particular denomination or outward church, fo called among men; No, my aim is higher. Thou mayest be a member of any particular Christian society, enjoying the foundest and most apostolic form; thou mayest be esteemed for thy zeal, thy strictness, and for thine whole outward deportment; thou mayest make a good profession too before many witnesses; and yet, after all this, and much more, not be a member of Christ's spiritual church, or a Christian indeed. It is even a possible case, that thou mayest be a minister or preacher to others, and be enabled even to work miracles in nature and grace (for Judas and others have done these) and yet be in the gall of bitterness and bond of iniquity. Thy heart may be unchanged; thy spirit may be loaded with pride, malice, and every evil temper; thy affections may be fixed upon felf or the creatures; notwithstanding much apparent zeal, knowledge, or reputation. Thou mayest also change thy feet, without being renewed in thyfelf: and thou mayest hold any or every form of godliness, and for many years, but all the while be a stranger

to its power. Thou mayest write books in proof of the true church, and be the instrument of leading others into the true profession; but be in thyself, notwithstanding, only founding brass and a tinkling cymbal. It is hard to say, what thou mayest be; what gifts, attainments, admiration, and successes, thou mayest receive or procure; without following Christ in the regeneration, and without being united to him in the sacred sellowship of his Holy Spirit. It is certainly possible to be much in shew, and nothing in reality: and how much, it is worth both thy labor and mine to search deeply and inquire. The sincere soul, with fear and trembling, seeks the discussion: the hypocrite, with a careless or presumptuous considence, abhors and shuns it.

O what a difinal case it is for a man to be a stranger to his own self! How deplorable, that he should not know the motives and machinations of an evil heart of unbelief; that he should call evil good, and good evil; and that he should fancy himself to be well enough, upon the very precipice of death everlasting! What an hardening deceit-sulness is there in sin! What an unseeling stupe-saction doth it occasion in every sinful heart! No law, no judgements, no threatnings, no chastisements, on the one hand; no gospel, no promises, no mercies, no glories, on the other; are sufficient, of themselves, to awaken a poor sinner from this sensual

omnipotence alone, thou blessed HEAD of the church; the powers of thine eternal Godhead only, can quicken into spiritual life, the wretched, sunk, and helpless sons of men. When thou speakest, in thy word, Arise, from the dead; thy Spirit rushes rapidly to the inmost recesses of the soul, and raises it up with vigor from the mental grave. Who can resist thy will; who frustrate thy gracious designs; who retain him in bondage, to whom thou impartest liberty and peace?—Lord, all hearts, all hands, all wisdom, all things, are thine; and to thee alone be ascribed the kingdom, the power, and the glory.

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And, Lord, who and what am I, or what is any other man, that thou shouldest make me, or him, a living member of thine holy and dearly united body! I have done nothing, I could do nothing, to deserve or obtain this, in my fallen state, being altogether wicked and weak. It was thy mercy, thy tender mercy alone, which visited my soul, and gave me eyes to see, and a heart to desire, the things that make for my peace. It is the same merciful power, which supports and carries me on from day to day. I do not leave thee, only because thou dost not, in tender faithfulness, leave or forsake me. Without thine help, I show droop in a moment. O make me fensible, always sensible, of this my weakness

and manifold infirmities, that I may never trust to myself, but that thy power may rest upon me. Thus keep me in the fellowship of thy church, of thy brethren (as thou hast deigned to call them) and mine; and enable me, with the deepest humility and gratitude, to remember the spiritual dignity thou hast conferred, and to walk, in the utmost degree, worthy of the high vocation wherewith I am called. In this way, by thy continual help, may I endeavour to make my calling and election fure. And when all that I am to do, and all that is to be done in me, is completed according to thy will; O receive me up to thyfelf, my Lord, my life, my God; and let me fee thee face to face, according to thy word, which I have fo often longed spiritually to see while in these regions of dulness and forrow!-My foul exults in the bright expectation of its full interest in that great truth, which from age to age is fulfilling, and finally shall be accomplished, that the GLORIOUS CHURCH, which my dear Redeemer hath purchased, he will, as High-priest, or Man-mediator, present to himself, in JEHOVAH, without spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing; yea, holy, unblameable, and unreproveable in his fight; and that I, a poor unworthy finner by nature, but a member of Christ by grace, shall stand in my lot also at the end of the days, and enjoy my Lord and my portion amongst his redeemed for ever.

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### TABERNACLE.

THE literal fense of this word is, a dwelling or babitation; and it is peculiarly the name of that remarkable building or tent, which according to God's command was raised by Moses, and carried through the wilderness with the Israelites to Canaan, as the token of God's residence with them.

The purpose of it was expressed in the command; Let them [the children of Israel] make me a sanctuary (a place of peculiar holiness) that I may double among st them; wherein I may vouchfase my Shecinah, my immediate presence to or among them: According to all that I shall cause thee to see, after the pattern of the tabernacle, and the pattern of all the instruments thereof, even so shall ye make it \*.

The whole structure, therefore, had a particular sense in it, and exhibited, to the spiritual discernment of those that were Israelites indeed, several important truths; some of which are obvious to the spiritual discernment of God's people to this day, and were designed to be so. They preached Christ and his goodness in a mystery; and they prophesied of him till he came, who was the great minister of the true

<sup>\*</sup> Exod. xxv. 8, 9,

<sup>†</sup> Matt. xi. 13.

Tabernacle [that which the other only shadowed forth, but had no reality in itself] which the Lord pitched, and not man \*.

The tabernacle, therefore, of *Moses* was called also a tent, and was covered by one, intimating, that it was to pass away and to cease, when Christ should have accomplished the whole purpose, which it prefigured, and should have terminated his salvation in an everlasting temple. This temple, for that reason, is called, the temple of the tabernacle of the testimony in heaven +; i. e. the final accomplishment and manifestation in heaven, of what both the tabernacle and the temple testified and led to upon earth.

It is highly derogatory to the wisdom and truth of the Most High to suppose, as some have dared to suppose, that this sabric of the tabernacle and all its appurtenances and economy, so carefully delineated by God himself, so expressly wrought under his divine tuition, and so exactly ordered in all its parts and applications, had neither certain nor sublime meanings in it; but was only a colluvies, a mass of idle ceremonies, borrowed from heathens, and calculated merely to soothe the idolatrous prejudices, or to employ the attention, of the Israelites in their passage through the wilderness. But the Lord speaks otherwise,

<sup>\*</sup> Heb. viii. 2. † Rev. xv. 5.

† Apostolus ait: litera enim occidit, spiritus vivisicat.
Si enim boc tantum volumus intelligere, quod sonat in litera;

and calls them HIS charge [a matter to be closely, carefully, conftantly, observed and considered, as the Hebrew word imports] HIS flatutes, HIS judgements, and HIS commandments \*; which were to be laid up in his people's hearts, and in their fouls; which they were to teach, and to speak of, when they were fitting in the house, or walking by the way, when they were lying down or rifing up, that their days might be increased, not merely in number, but with the true increase of happiness and divine enjoyment, as the days of heaven upon earth +. They were full of those fecrets of wisdom, that hidden mystery, which God only explains to the foul, and flews it, that both his works and word are two-fold in existence, having an outward use and a spiritual fignification t.

The tabernacle fignified both Christ personal and Christ mystical; in other words, it prefigured both himself and his body the church. It was therefore anointed with oil, and all its utenfils; and thus made figuratively holy. So Christ and his people take their very name, from that holy unction, which the divine

aut parvam aut prope nullam ædificationem de divinis lectionibus capiemus. Illa enim OMNIA quæ recitantur, typus erant et imago futurorum. In Judæis enim figurata; in nobis, gratia Dei donante, completa sunt. Aug. Serm. 201. de tempore. \* Deut. xi. 1. + Deut. xi. 18--21.

1 Job xi. 6. כפלים לתושית is a name for that Wisdom, which sees things as they are, and for what they are intended. Prov. ii. 7.

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Spirit hath poured forth upon them, and by which they are for ever confecrated unto God.

It denoteth Christ personal, as the particular being in whom DWELLETH all the fulness of the Godhead bodily, or, as in one body, or eminent place; whence the word place \* was anciently applied to Jehovah in our nature. Thus the blasphemy, mentioned against

\* mpn. As a place is a point, in which the action of a being is determined; fo the word is applied to Christ, as that person, in whom the purposes and power of lehovah, respecting salvation, solely concentrate, and by whom they are effectuated. He is to be understood in th's name, as the center, point, place, or instrument, of all divine authority, exaltation, and glory; and the word feems to be used to give our feeble intellect an idea of the great condescention of that divine Person, who will be found of his people in a limited spot, the human nature of Jesus; though, as to his divine nature, he is illimitable, being in every place, and above it, incomprehenfibly. Thus Jehovah made him known to M fes: Behold, the PLACE with me. And the reprefentation ordained to be made of this place, where God would meet with and communicate with his people, was called, מקום רגלי the place of my feet, or footfool, the rest of my feet. See Pfal cxxxii. 7. Ifa. lx. 13. This was the ross, or mercy feat, which was at the feet of the cherubim, or throne af glory, where JEHOVAH only would be found, where he refted for falvation, and to which all the true worshippers of old (as to the very life and point of all their service turned their saces from all parts of the world. This rendered by the apostle propitiation, and directly referred to Christ.

The rabbins themselves understood by PLACE, the essence of God, and the means of comtemplating it.

MAIMON, More Nev. P. i. c. 8.

God and his tabernacle \*, is understood to be against God and his Christ, who, as the Word, or revealer of God, was made flesh, became manifest in the flesh, and dwelt, egraphwose, tabernacled, among us +. He was the name, and that cloud of glory, placed in the church of old, who manifested his presence by a thousand signs and tokens; that Jehovah, who was to come and dwell in the midst of the church in the latter day; and that temple and tabernacle not made with hands, resembled by those, which God had sketched out for men to raise.

The tabernacle also denoted Christ mystical, that is, his body the church, in union with him the head. And this tabernacle, made up of various parts and members, signified his people of various countries, times, capacities, and designations. Thus, in that memorable chapter of Ezekiel, the promise runs; My tabernacle shall be with them; yea, I will be their God, and they shall be my people. And the heathen shall know, that I Jehovah do sanstify Israel, when my sanstuary shall be in the midst of them for evermore. Our Lord explains this in his last prayer so. The Psalmist also prophesies of the church; there is

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<sup>\*</sup> Rev. xiii. 6. † John i. 14. To keep up the memorial of this, when they entered Canaan, the Ifraelites kept the feast of tabernacles, which fignified, both the Lord's abode with them, and their pilgrimage and sojourning upon earth.

27, 28. | John xvii. 22, 23.

a river [the Spirit of life] the streams whereof shall make glad the city of God, the holy place of the tabernacles of the Most High\*. The outward tabernacle was a figure for the time then present; and it was a figure representing a greater and more perfect tabernacle not made with hands, that is to say, not of this building †, frame, or constitution, which were holy places made with hands; evidently implying, that this true house or dwelling of God, his people collected, was signified by the outward dwelling, which he ordered to be raised among his signified by the fews; and, in this respect, and for this end, Judah was called his sanctuary, and Israel his dominion.

Though it may not be right for us curiously or abfolutely to point out the meaning of the several members of this holy structure; yet doubtless the wisdom
of God had an intention in every part of what is so
carefully specified and commanded. We should speak
with caution upon these divine allegories, lest we sollow our own fancies instead of the mind of God;
but doubtless the allegories do exist, and have a sacred
fense and analogy of faith, whether we understand
them or not. They were also proposed for our consideration, or they had never been recorded. It is our
duty then to read with reverence, to pray for gracious
understanding, and to compare things spiritual with

<sup>\*</sup> Pfalm xlvi. 4.

<sup>†</sup> Heb. ix. 9, 11, 24.

spiritual\*. In this consisted the holy learning of ancient believers, and not in fystems excogitated and drawn forth by human reason and invention, which have produced all the present errors and uncertainties in religion: and in this study of the spirit and language of the Bible, to the end of time, will confift all the true knowledge, in divine things, of every real Christian in the world. The rest, as it comes from man, will be found like him-altogether vanity.

As the tabernacle fignified the church, fo the curtains, and other parts of the tabernacle, stood for members or branches of the church. The curtains were expressly to be joined by the edge or lip, a woman to her fifter (for so is the Hebrew phrase) plainly denoting, that all the members of Christ are spiritually conjoined together, in one true confession of him, and in a real consociation with each other. The bars, the boards, the taches, the fockets, &c. forming expressly the ONE tabernacle +, appear to

† Exod. xxvi. 6.

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<sup>\*</sup> It is an unpleasant truth to say, that there are people among us, who would not be thought uninformed in divine things, but who are almost as ignorant and averse to the Old Testament, as Lord Whitworth, in his account of the Russians, represents that people to be, who, with equal superstition and ignorance, will by no means read it publicly, nor yet so much as suffer it to le upon their altars. They forget, that Christ hath referred to this very book for the truth of his mission, and that, without it, the New Testament would lose its first and great recorded evidence and foundation.

imply other members or means of perfecting this facred confociation; so that (as the apostle expresses it) the whole building might be fitly framed together in Christ—for an habitation of God through the Spirit\*.

None but the priefts could enter into the tabernacle, and fee what was in it. So, into the true tabernacle, none but those, who are made priests spiritually unto God+, are admitted or can experimentally know the things, that are freely given of God. This is plainly intimated by the Pfalmift, who, though he was outwardly a fecular man, could fay of himfelf, as being one of these spiritual priests; in the time of trouble the Lord shall hide me in his pavilion; in the secret of his tabernacle shall he hide me t. He not only could enter into the tabernacle by faith, but even into the fecret-place of it; and that this is the common privilege of God's people, unaltered and unalterable by dispensation or time, he shews, in another pfalm, by faying; he that dwelleth in the fecret place of the most High, shall abide under the shadow of the Almighty §; or, as it is expressed in other places, the shadow of his wings; plainly alluding to the sense typified by the wings of the cherubim, who covered first the mercy-seat, or Christ, and under him the whole ark or church of God ||.

<sup>\*</sup> Eph. ii. 21, 22.

† Pfalm xxvii. 6.

| Pfalm xvii. 8. To this our Lord may possibly point in Matt. xxiii. 37.

It is also worth observing, though it can only be hinted here, that there is a beautiful train and arrangement of circumstances, in the letter of the law, and in the things signified, correspondent with each other, and illustrative of both, when brought into comparison.

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1. Thus, no person could approach the tabernacle of the Lord, nor eat of the Lord's passover, who had not undergone the facrament of circumcifion, which (as Maimonides observes) had a tendency "to diminish and weaken the natural appetite," and "which in its operation, abhorrent to nature, was no flight matter, like the hurt of a leg, or burning of an arm, but a very difficult and painful affair \*." - So spiritually; no man can partake of Christ, whose heart is uncircumcifed, and whose old man is not put off with his superfluity of naughtiness; the doing which is so painful to nature, as to be called crucifixion and death. The Spirit of God performs this work by the sharpnels of the law, as by a knife or two edged fword, piercing even to the dividing afunder of foul and spirit. And as circumcifion was outwardly performed in one part, as a token for all the old man, with his heart, or his affections and lusts; so the believer, in this life, is not wholly subdued in the old man, or at once, but partially and by degrees, as an earnest of

<sup>\*</sup> More New. p. iii. c. 49.

the whole, until the full redemption of the purchased possession.

- 2. The circumcifed person under the law brought his facrifice, confessed his sins upon its head, and pleaded the atonement.—Under the gospel; the sinner, convinced, circumcifed, and cut down by the spirituality of the law, confesses his sins and sinfulness, and consides in the great sacrifice of Christ once of fered, and at one time for all times\*, as his only propitiation and atonement.
- 3. Under the law; the priests washed at the laver, which stood between the altar + and the tabernacle, before they entered into the holy place.—Under the gospel; the spiritual priests, or true believers, having received the atonement by Christ; are washed by the water of regeneration, or renewing of the Holy Ghost; so that they put on the new man, who is created in righteousness and true holiness; and then are they illu-

\* Heb. x. 10. εφαπαξ.

† It is observable, that this altar and the laver were of brass, wm, a word which stands for the serpent, the author of sin: and here the sins of the people were to be done away, by him, who was to come in the likeness of sinful sless. But when the priests, representing the taithful, entered into the holy place, there no utensil of brass, no memorial of sin, was to be found; but all were of gold, the emblem of righteousness, and of Christ's righteousness, under which they were there considered, and not as sinners. This also shews the proper use of the word saints, persons separated to God and cleansed from sin, and therefore holy. I Pet. ii. 5. 

‡ Rom. v. 11.

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minated indeed, and enter into the true tabernacle, out of the view, understanding, fellowship, and spirit of this evil world, where they are fed by Christ the bread, enlightened by Christ the light, and offer up all their duties upon the golden altar, Christ, nearest to the holiest of all.

4. Under the law; the Holy Ghost signified, by the entrance of the high priest only once every year into the fecond part of the tabernacle, that the WAY [Christ] into the bolieft of all, was not yet made manifest, while as the first tabernacle was yet standing, which was a figure for the time then present \*.-Under the gospel; this fign was fulfilled by the true high-priest, Jesus Christ, who by one offering hath perfected for ever them that are sanctified, and therefore imparts to his people boldness, or liberty, to enter into the holiest by his blood, (for no priest entered thither without blood) through the wail, that is to fay, his flesh; fo that they may now draw near with a true heart, in full assurance of faith, having their hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience by his blood, and their bodies washed with pure water by his spirit +.

Thus, as the way to the holy and to the holieft under the law was by the altar and laver; so the plan of the gospel is, that, by propitiation and regeneration, the redeemed enter into the spiritual church here, and into glory hereafter.

\* Heb. ix. 7, 8, 9. C 5 + Heb. x. 19, &c. All

All the services of this tabernacle were carrying on, in some respect or other, daily; and particularly, there was the mon, or daily facrifice, which was a standing memorial or exhibition of Christ's death, till he should come into the world. No service was prefented, or accepted, without reference to atonement. The daily facrifice preached the continual efficacy of Christ's atonement, and of our continual support and acceptance by him. Faith always pleads this; and therefore (as the excellent Cocceius fays) when the opinion of another facrifice and of human performances being acceptable to God shall prevail in the professing church; then is the taking away the daily facrifice, and the faith and confession of faints. other words, it ceases to be a true church, or church of Christ. For these are not indifferent circumstances, about which it may or may not be pernicious to differ, but fundamentals, without which there can be no fuch thing as a faithful and Christian agreement.

The high priest under the law was to abide in the sanctuary constantly, and to pollute himself upon no occasion; for the crown or pre-eminence, or separation, of the anointing oil of his God was upon him. So Christ, being without infirmity, was consecrated for evermore and abideth always in the celestial sanctuary, called the right hand of God, as the head over all things to his church, and as the merciful and saithful

faithful high priest, who should confer both grace and

glory.

None could be a priest under the law but of the chosen tribe; and all his service and duty was allotted to him, and not carved by himself upon any occasion. So, under the gospel, the people of God are his heritage, i. e. his clergy \*, his portion by lot, the lot of his inheritance †, all which terms import a portion, selected or marked out by divine choice and appointment: and as they themselves are chosen for God, so their duties are allotted by God to every one of them. They are not their own; neither in soul or body, life or action: and this, when understood, is the highest privilege, which God can confer upon his redeemed, and the crown and security of all their happiness here and hereafter.

Lastly. The tabernacle was carried of old through the wilderness to Canaan, while those, who officiated in or belonged to it, were guided every step of the way, by day or night, and supported and defended by Omnipotence itself. So the church of Christ is in a wilderness here, not at home, is conducted by God's providence and grace, and sustained and protected by his almighty power. He ever bare them on eagle's wings [the emblem of his Spirit's agency] and brought them to himself \(\frac{1}{2}\): in his love and in his

‡ Exod. xix. 4.

<sup>\*</sup> nangos. 1 Pet. v. 3.

<sup>†</sup> Deut. xxxii.

pity he redeemed them, and he bare them, and carried them all the days of old\*. Thus when God's people move on in their spiritual journey, they call for his presence and support, as in antient times; Rise up, O Lord, and let thine enemies be scattered; and let them, that hate thee, slee before thee! And when they look forward to the end of their saith and hope, even to the times of restitution, the appointed revolution and final establishment, of all things; then they cry out; How long, O Lord, holy and true! Return, O Lord, unto the many thousands of Israel.

The Lord Christ considereth his body the church as his own-self, and therefore ordained this figure of the tabernacle to stand for both: and, in wonderful wisdom and propriety, it answers to both in their several respects and relations. He, that toucheth his people, toucheth (as it were) the apple of his eye, which he will not endure. Their troubles and forrows he reckons for his own: In all their afflictions he was afflicted. The injuries done to them, he esteems as done to himself; and, therefore, when Saul (afterwards Paul) was attacking the church, the Lord Jesus from heaven in mercy stopped his blind career with, Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou ME?—I am Jesus, whom thou persecutest. O what

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<sup>·</sup> Ifa. lxiii. 9.

<sup>+</sup> Acts iii. 21.

love is this, that should thus deal familiarly with man! That a person in Jehovah should unite himself with human slesh to bring many perishing mortals to glory! that he should so unite himself with these, as to make them parts of himself, and through himself to bring them into immediate and everlasting communion with the Godhead!

Believer, remember this in all thy trials and for-Thy Saviour hath pledged himfelf to fustain both thee and them. Thou art a part of his tabernacle, which the enemy may attack, but shall not deftroy; for it is dedicated and devoted to God. Not a bone of his personal body could be broken, as a fign or token, that not one member of his mystical body should ever be ruined or lost. Pray then for the confidence of faith, that thou mayest face those enemies without fear, who are more thy Saviour's enemies, than they are or can be thine. His strength must prevail: and it is thy privilege to lean upon it and to find it expressly engaged for thee. Thou art in the wilderness here; but he is thy pillar of cloud and light of fire, thy guide, thy shield, thy fure defence, and will never leave nor forfake thee throughout all the way to the heavenly Canaan.

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Remember too, that thy high priest is always perfonally in his fanctuary, and always in spirit with and in his people, ready to hear thy prayers, and ready to yield the promised succor. Come to the throne of

grace,

grace, whenever thou wilt; there he is, and there he abideth ever. He heareth in the night-season as well as in the day time; for he, that keepeth thee, will neither slumber nor sleep. Thou mayest and dost forget thyself; but he never ceases to remember thee and all thy affairs. As his ear is ever open to thy prayers, so his eye is always upon thee for good. Thou art a part of himself; and it is impossible, that thou shouldest ever be miserable or lost.

These words and figures, which the divine wisdom hath afforded to convey these momentous truths, are undoubtedly strong; but they are weakness itself, compared with the things and purposes, which they are employed to denote. Raise thy thoughts, O Christian, ever so high; express them never so forcibly; call the Lord, thy rock, thy fortress, thy deliverer, thy strength, thy buckler, the horn of thy salvation, thy high tower, or by a thousand other endearing and powerful terms; he is all this indeed: but he is ten thousand times more than this to thee; yea, infinitely more, than the words of heaven or earth can declare. Call then upon this thy redeeming God, who is worthy to be praised; and so shalt thou be saved from thine enemies.

"But I am pressed with the sense of my unworthiness, of my extreme sinfulness both of heart and life."—This is a reason, not for staying away, but for ealling upon him more earnestly. Peter evidently

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knew not what he faid, when he cried, Depart from me, for I am a finful man, O Lord! He came to fave fuch, as feel themselves unsaved, and therefore despair of other remedies. No man since the fall was ever received by him, but as a poor, distressed, and helpless finner. He hath nothing to do with those, who fancy they can help themselves, or who would be faved in part by themselves. Thy forrows of heart and convictions of fin are probably that painful circumcifion of the Spirit, which by the law he uses to mortify and fubdue thy old man, and without which thou canst not know the power or the worth of his grace \*. This circumcision, like the strait gate (another image for the fame thing) may be difficult and even odious to flesh and blood; but it must be undergone, it must be passed through, to the kingdom of God. There be many that climb up another way, and have no evidence of their profession, but their own fleshly (or, as it may be called, uncircumcised, unsubdued) reason; but this keeps them whole in themselves, without compunction of spirit, without renunciation of felf, without giving up all into the hands of Jesus, without communion with him, and without deriving any thing from him. Their fouls

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<sup>\*</sup> After the revelation of the fiery law, the Lord no longer met with his people, at Sinai, inspiring terrors; but in the tabernacle, in Christ and his offices of salvation, speaking mercy and peace to the soul. There is an analogy to this in christian experience.

are lean and empty of the true favor of the know-ledge of Christ; and their object is to work, and to live, and to increase, by themselves. But thou, O man of God, slee these things. Let Jesus be the alone object of thy trust and considence. Every thing upon earth, without Christ, and besides Christ, shall fail. He only is the rock; and his work only is perfect.

Come then, thou broken in heart, let us go into his tabernacle, let us worship at his footstool. Let us plead the facrifice of our pafchal Lamb, who was appointed to be flain for the worst finners in the world, even for those who feel themselves to be the worst; let us confess our fins, and transfer them to his facred and devoted head; let us approach his holy laver, and ask for the purification and grace of his Holy Spirit; let us advance in faith to his more immediate prefence, confider ourselves as redeemed priests, who have now a right to enter into his holy place and be members of his mystic tabernacle; let us feed upon Christ in secret, and secretly be enlightened by him and understand wisdom; let us also offer upon him, the golden altar which shall sanctify the gift, the largest tributes of the incense of praise and thanksgiving, for the unspeakable mercies of our God; and then let us not wrong the truth of JEHOVAH for a moment by a doubt, but that they shall come up with acceptance before him, and that he will glorify us, as the parts or members, as well as the whole house of his glory.

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## TEMPLE.

AFTER many years, and in God's appointed time, the tabernacle of *Moses* and its occonomy were accomplished in the temple of *Solomon*. But both of these were shadows or figures of Christ and his people. The one denoted them as passing through the wilderness of this world; the other represented them as fixed for ever in heaven.

The Hebrew name, אַבְּיל, for which we have no correspondent word but temple, is usually derived from a root which signifies power; and possibly there is an allusion to this, among other circumstances, in the name of the two pillars in the porch, called Jachin and Boaz; the literal translation of which is, he will establish it in strength. The whole fabric in itself, and especially in what it was intended to describe, was ordered and settled by infinite might and wisdom, beyond the craft of enemies to impeach, or their power to impair. For,

As the tabernacle was constructed according to the pattern or representation, which was shewn to Moses in the holy mount; so the temple was arranged and framed, in every part of it, according to the pattern which David had by the Spirit, and gave to Solomon

his fon \*. And fo far was all this above human schemes or invention, that even David himself, wife and prophetic as he was, could not fo much as understand the things communicated to him, without divine and immediate instruction. All this (faid he) concerning the writing, or draught, JEHOVAH made me to understand by his hand [or Spirit] upon me, even ALL THE WORKS of this pattern +. And then, like a true king-shephe d, he prays for the flock committed to his charge; that Jehovah in covenant would preserve this [the temple and its appurtenances] continually for the framing of thoughts, or exciting spiritual ideas, for the heart of his people, and settle their heart towards himt. In this view of its use and defignation, well might he call it great and wonderful s, or mysterious (as the word also means;) for no other building ever had fuch honour put upon it, as to be the representative of God in Christ, and of Christ in his people. Nor could any have contrived fuch a fensible demonstration of divine truth, or taught the purpose of it, but God himself: and in this knowledge, the highest and most important in the world, confifted all the learning of the ancient and faithful Jews. In divine things, man never yet knew any thing rightly, but by divine teaching: his own reason, fallen and benighted as it is, can only

<sup>\* 1</sup> Chron. xxviii. 12.

<sup>‡ 1</sup> Chron. xxix. 18.

<sup>+</sup> Ubi suprà, v. 19.

<sup>§ 2</sup> Chron. ii. 9. lead

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lead him wider and wider aftray, in all attempts to fearch out God, or to study the Almighty to perfection. It may lead him to the pitch of the wildest delirium and error in matters of this kind. For, if madness be, in its true definition, nothing more or less than the wandering of the mind from reality, or the triumph of the imagination over truth; then, the innumerable excursions which have been made by men, upon subjects of divinity, without the rule and beyond the rule of God's own revelation, and the forgetfulness that this revelation contains no questions to be ventilated, but determinations to be followed; ferve to shew, how few fane and sober people, in God's eye, are to be found in the world, and how, of all others, the philosophers (as they are wrongly called) of the day, spoiled and spoiling others through vain deceit, have the least real claim of all men to the firm and jnst condition of a found mind. They, uniformly following the rudiments of the world, can ascend or wish to afcend no higher, and will, together with all their thoughts, if grace interpose not, perish with it. to return.

Besides the inward and spiritual glory of the temple, which certainly was infinitely above all other considerations; the skill and proportions of the architecture itself were so perfect and extraordinary, that Villalpandus, whom our Selden calls a most excellent divine and mathematician, does not scruple to assert,

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that the Greeks (and from them the Romans, and particularly Vitruvius, the ingenious architect to Julius and Augustus Casar) derived their knowledge of the art from it, and from other edifices built by Solgmon \*. The present ruins of Tadmor or Palmyra, founded by that prince, though chiefly remains of structures raised perhaps long fince his time, may have been framed from his original defigns; if even none of those durable marbles (which is not wholly improbable) are fragments of the originals themselves. Concerning the temple, this appears to be certain, that, whether the riches and vast expence in of raising it, or the quantity of materials and number of workmen, or the exquisite beauty of the edifice itself, be considered; the world never faw a building of fuch outward splendor and magnificence, or of such inward holiness and majesty. It was the visible palace of the King of heaven upon earth; and a fensible picture of his fublime and invisible glory.

But its inward and spiritual glory, even in the estimation of the Jews, constituted its chief and true grandeur. The Shecinah, or divine presence, typisted by a luminous cloud upon the ark of the covenant, and manifested by answers of Urim and Thummim,

<sup>\*</sup> Seld. de jure nat. l. i. c. 2. Wits. Ægypt. p. 464.

† The overlaying of the most holy place only with gold, a cubical room of 30 feet in the side, has been calculated to come to £4,320,000 of our sterling money.

PRIDEAUX's Conn. P. I. B. 3.

and of the Holy Spirit in prophetic inspirations, was the peculiar eminence of that holy and fumptuous pile. Yet these supreme advantages remained but for a time, partly through the apostasy of the Jews, and partly because they were prefigurative only of more wonderful declarations and displays of divine mercy, which concentered in the appearance of the Son of God in the world, under the name IMMANUEL, GOD with us, or, God manifest in the slesh \*. He is the true presence or exhibition of Jehovah; revealing grace, mercy, and peace, to poor and perifhing men. And when he appears in his holy temple, as he doth now in part in his people individually, and will hereafter in his whole church collectively: then it may be faid, beholding the beautiful intention of Solomon and his temple reforved into Christ and his church,

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<sup>\*</sup> The whole fabric of the universe, the courses and ordinations both of providence and grace, compose only one undeviating (though to our view complex) fystem of means, and are by no means a final cause or end, either in whole or in part. In proof of this, we may observe there is no rest, or resting place, in the visible or elementary creation: all things fluctuate and move onwards, either to produce or to establish f mething beyond themselves; and these in their turn, act over the same or similar operations, for others. Confequently, nothing here has attained its own proper end; but is restlessly urged to a plus ultrà. So the apostle; the whole creation travaileth, &c. And grace itself, with all its operations and objects here, passes on through the world as through a strange country, and pushes on for consummation and rest to a futurity of glory.

that greater than those are here \*. The temple was only a figure of Christ's body, and was so explained by himself in John ii. 21. Alluding in the first instance to his natural body, and, through that, in the second, to his spiritual body, of which the component parts, his people, are termed his members, his flesh and his bones; not one of which, however oppressed for a time, could, not more than those of his natural body, be finally lost or broken.

\* The temple was built upon Mount Moriah, the mount of vision or instruction; so called, because there Abraham foresaw, that Jehovah would come to his temple, or Christ appear in the flesh, for the salvation of his church. Abraham himself named the particular spot Jehovah jireh, in token of his faith in the promise: and accordingly the next words should have been rendered, In the mount Jehovah shall be seen. This mountain, by a figure, stands for the temple itself; and both temple and mountain for the spiritual church, of which Isaiah and Zechariah prophesied. Isaiah xxv. 6, 7, 10. Zech. viii. 3.

Among other proofs, that the outward splendor of the temple was the least part of its glory; the second temple, under Zerubbabel, inferior as it was to the former, was prophesied of as vastly surpassing it in real greatness; because the desire of all nations was to appear in it, and to give peace in that place. Hag. ii. 7, 9. This title is personal to Christ (contrary to the opinion of a late author) as that same word room was to Saul, I Samix. 20. That this was truly the second temple, notwithstanding Herod's new erections, and that, as such, the daily sacrifice and other ministrations were continually carried on in it; see Scaliger de emend. temp. 1. 6. and Seld. de Synedr. 1. iii. c. 13. § 8. See also Dr. Gill on the Prophecies, c. 3.

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Gentiles as well as Jews were employed in preparing materials for, and in building, the outward temple. And in Christ's spiritual temple, blessed be God, Jews and Gentiles have one common right and privilege, are mutually members of the same glorious sabric, and shall be united in fraternal, indivisible, love for evermore. It is even probable, that the Gentiles will make up the far greater part of that holy assembly, for never do we read of such multitudes of true believers in the Jewish history, as we can trace from time to time in later records. Possibly, the greatest gathering of souls, at any one period of the Hebrew church, was in the last period of forty years, a little before the entire abolition of the Jewish place and removal of the nation.

All the materials, and every part of the outward fabric, were prepared and fitted for their respective places, before they were brought together; so that (according to the divine command) there was neither hammer, nor ax, nor any tool of iron, heard in the bouse, while it was building \*. This was to denote, that all the spiritual building is fitted and prepared in this present life, part by part, in their order and succession; and that, hereafter, the component parts will be fitly joined together, and remain in a holy and heavenly rest for the everlasting habitation of God. There they shall no more need to be hewn with

. I Kings vi. 7.

afflictions,

afflictions, to cut away their exorbitancies; no more hammered with temptations and trials, to fix and confirm their faith; nor shall the iron ever enter again into their souls, to divest them of earth, or to prepare them for heaven.

The outward temple and its ceconomy were to ferve but for a while, and stood upon a conditional covenant and carnal ordinances, imposed until the time of reformation, or of correction and full explanation \*; i. e. by a more perfect dispensation. The Jews broke the conditions, and, according to God's forefight and appointment, they are become a proverb and a by-word among all people; their house is left unto them desolate; and their fruitful land is become barren, through their wickedness. The Lord bath cut off the chariot from Ephraim, and the horse from Jerusalem; that is, he hath removed the ancient means of grace from the Jews, by which in spirit (like Elijah) they mounted to heaven, and in consequence hath also taken away those faithful and praying redeemed ones, who are the Lord's host indeed, and engaged in his fpiritual warfare. The fulfilment of these prophecies is now as evident, as it hath been for ages. Every Jew we fee (and we may fee Jews scattered all over the world) is a mark of scorn The nation, quite unexampled in the history of al other people, is kept distinct from the rest of man-

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<sup>\*</sup> Heb. ix. 10.

kind, though confused in itself and every where difperfed. The land of Canaan is now barren and wretched beyond comparison. And if we enquire into the cause of all this, the Lord himself foretold the proper answer, near three thousand years ago, and before the great transgression \*. I might have said above three thousand years, even before they had entered the land, or had thoughts of building the temple +. And how often they were warned and threatened afterwards, we may read in many parts of the bible t .- But God's true and spiritual people are partakers of a better covenant, which is established upon better promises \$ ; - a covenant, which stands, not upon man's performance, but upon God's prerogative; -promises, which do not rest upon human will and power, but upon the divine faithfulness and omnipotence. This is the covenant, that I will make with the house of Israel AFTER those days [ the days that were to come, עולם הבא, the world to come, (as the Jews speak) i. e. the future or Christian dispensation ] saith the LORD: I will put my laws into their mind, and write them in their hearts : and I will be to them a God [their Alehim], and they shall be to me a people |. To these spiritual people, and of this everlasting co-

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<sup>\* 1</sup> Kings ix. 8, 9. † Deut. xxix. 24. † Jer. xxii. 5, &c. Hosea ix. 17. Luke xix. 41, &c.

<sup>§</sup> Heb. viii. 6. || Heb. viii. 10. from Jer.

venant, it is faid; the mountains shall depart, and the hills be removed; but my kindness shall not depart from thee, neither shall the covenant of my peace be removed, saith the LORD, that hath mercy upon thee \*.

From hence we may perceive too, that the things of God, pertaining to falvation, are of a divine and fpiritual nature; and that, though they may be shadowed forth by terrene and fensible objects, they are not necessarily connected with, and do not depend upon them. Thus, the law completed nothing, but was energaywyn, the fuccedaneum, the fubintroduction of, the subordinate means to bring in, a better hope, by the which we draw nigh unto God +. If any outward fervices and circumstances upon earth could claim the privilege of a necessary connection with fpiritual things, certainly the Jewish œconomy, as ordained by God himself, might claim it above all others. But when the carnal Ijraelites, merely because they were Israelites and children of Abraham t, trusted in God's favor, without the circumcifion of the heart or confequent holiness of life; when they exclaimed, in this spirit, the temple of the Lord, the temple of the Lord, the temple of the Lord, are we, grounding them-

<sup>\*</sup> Isa. liv. 10. see also Isa. lix. 21. † Heb. vii. 19. ‡ This is the unhappy Jewish considence to this day. They expect mercy and favor from God, because they are the descendants of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob.

felves upon this external distinction alone, without any spiritual sense of its true life and importance; then, as the prophet speaks, they trusted in lying words \*; and they found at last, that, when the Lord of the temple appeared, he first in fign, and afterwards in fact, drove them all out of it, because they had made it a den of thieves. They had robbed it of its true glory and intention, and perverted it to the world, the flesh, and the devil. And thus it was with respect to their facrifices, which, when made carnally only, were no more than the head of a dog, or fwine's blood, before the Lord. Nay, he who killed a clean beaft not in faith, by which alone it could typically bear fin, shed innocent blood in God's account, with the aggravation of doing it in the place where guilt was to be confessed and atoned +.

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In like manner, it is not enough for us to call ourfelves Christians, and to value ourselves upon any
privileges, which we have outwardly above the heathen world, if we have not also Christ in us the hope
of glory. A man may affent to all the articles of the
Christian faith, and yet be condemned for an unbeliever. He may go through every means of grace,
and partake of the holy sacraments; he may even live
a sober and decent life, with all these religious duties,
and may do much for himself, his friends, and the

<sup>\*</sup> Jer. vii. 4. † Lev. xvii. 3, 4. Jer. vii. 6. D 2 world;

world; but still be dead to God, a wretched empty formalist, without faith, or hope, or love, or any true taste or relish of spiritual and heavenly things. Natural men, and especially those who have been trained up to science and the knowledge of divinity in an ethical and metaphysical way, are amazed at this sort of language, and, with the learned scribes and pharisees of old, cannot conceive how it is possible, that they should be blind in these matters, and that simple and unlearned people should know more of them than themselves \*. Hence it is, that they think them con-

<sup>\*</sup> Perhaps, there may be a fnare (often to be guarded against) in genius and a fine understanding, even when employed in the things of God. Rational thoughts, brilliant expressions, a captivating oratory, and the like, are but little akin to the simplicity of God's word, and the plainness with which it is written. Men of this kind, even good men, are liable to be drawn into abfiract and metaphyfical refearches, into argumentative or disputatious strains, into new, and therefore suspicious, theories and distinctions, rather than into those plain facts and truths, which fill the facred pages without the πιθοις λογοις of man's wisdom, or into such a deep impression of their importance, as leaves no inclination for what will then be understood to be an egregious triffing of human powers, instead of that spiritual energy which refers all the glory and all the bleffing to a higher cause. In proportion as men are fond of disputing, or of (what they call) the reasonableness of things, in religion; in that prop rtion will they be found dull within, and weak without. God will blefs nothing but his own fimple unadulterated truth; and the plainer this is fet forth, the better. Nobody thinks, that the splendor of the diamond should be hid by a splendid case: it looks

ceited, and affected with the defire of fingularity; while they speak (and our Lord puts himself with them) what they do know experimentally, and testify what they have feen spiritually; and therefore they neither receive their witness, unless God have mercy upon them, nor can endure their perfons. They forget, in this vein of reproach, that God's witnesses have often stood alone in his cause. Elijah was almost if not the only prophet, who refifted the torrent in his time; and Micaiah the fon of Imlah had all the other prophets against him, when he testified against an evil king. When he was cautioned against this fingularity, he replied, with a noble heroism of faith; As Jehovah liveth, even what my God faith, that will I speak \*. It was said of Athanasius, that he was against all the world, and all the world against him: and the fame might have been faid of Paphnutius, Luther, and many others. We must detach, in this great cause, persons from things, and number from consequence. The truth of God hath ever had but few followers in its truth, though many professors. Strait is the gate now, as it ever was, and narrow is the way which leadeth unto life; and FEW there be that find it. It was always a comparatively LITTLE flock, to whom it is the Father's good pleasure to give the kingdom.

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best when exposed to view, upon the plainest and the gravest ground.

2 Chron. xviii. 13.

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Reader,

Reader, art thou of this flock, this spiritual teme ple? Doth Christ (which is the purpose of this temple) dwell in thy heart by faith? Art thou preparing for God's everlasting inhabitation within thee, by the operations of his Spirit, by the correction of his word, by the fuccession of his providences, by faith in his mercies, by love to himself and his service? Art thou looking toward the mercy feat of his holy temple, or, in other words, to Christ as thine head, as well as the head of all other his people? Is the defire of thy foul to his name, and to the remembrance of him? Canst thou fay, With my foul have I defired him in the night, and my spirit within me bath sought him early? Art thou looking, in the ways of holinefs, for this bleffed Immanuel, as thine only expectation, and only hope? Is it, at times, the melting, the burning defire of thine heart, to fee his presence in righteousness, and to wake up in his likeness? If Christ do indeed dwell in thy heart by faith, if thou art a real member of his holy temple, thou wilt love the light of his countenance above all things; thou wilt dread the thought of departing from him, or of his absence from thee; and, as thou art graciously made his habitation, thou wilt fometimes, if not often, long to be in his, even in the manfion which he hath prepared for thee .- O what felicity is there in these divine expectations! How do they vivify the foul, and animate it above the fordid, miserable pursuits and agitations of a passing world!

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As the greatest stars appear minute and inconsiderable to us because of their distance; so the Christian, who is lifted up the highest in spirit towards his heavenly home, can behold, with the most gracious indifference, the cares of time, and can count them and the earth itself, but littleness, and even dung, compared with the excellency of Christ and his transcendent mercies!

## HOUSE OF GOD.

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This term conveys the same idea with the word temple, under a more familiar form. It implies, by an easy sigure, the constant inhabitation of God with and in his people, as his savored and peculiar home. The house of God is the church of the living God\*. Not the frame of a building, but a particular designation of persons: whose house are WE + (says the apostle, speaking of Christ); we believers, whom he is building up for that purpose, as parts composing the grand sabric, in which he will abide for ever.

This building is of God. No tool of man can be lifted up upon it: men themselves are but tools in

\* 1 Tim. iii. 15. † Heb. iii. 6.

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his hand, accomplishing his work. The attempt is violation and pollution in the fight of God \*.

The design is of God. None can add, none can diminish, here. The plan was laid before the foundation of the world, and hath been carrying into execution from time to time, according to the contract

\* Exod. xx. 25. It is feriously to be remarked, how exact and careful the whole Jewish œconomy was of any thing polluted or forbidden. No pleas of danger or convenience were admitted in breach of the rule. Persons uncircumcifed, or out of the covenant; and persons circumcifed, and therefore holy in that respect, yet having contracted any defilement; were excluded from holy offices and places, while under those circumstances. When Nadab and Abibu, the confecrated priests and fons of Aaron, from whatever motive either of floth or perverseness, offered strange fire before the Lord; fire which had not descended from keaven; their service was abominable, and their persons were destroyed. And when Uzziah, apprehending the fall of the ark, in its passage from Kiriath-jearim, put forth an unhallowed and forbidden hand with error or rashness to support it, the Lord made a breach upon him, for a warning to others. 2 Sam. vi. 6 .- All this preaches to us, in a most lively yet awful manner, that God will be fanclified IN them that come nigh him (Lev. x. 3.); that only the pure fire of his own Spirit can carry up the incense of prayer and praise, with acceptance before him; and that those, who intrude themselves contrary to his word, or meddle with holy things in an unhallowed way, or prefume upon their own powers or goodness to support the truth of God, faithless in his providence or independent of his grace; shall fail in their object, and (if mercy prevent not) perish in their sins. See Isa. 1. 11. Numb. iv. 15. 1 Chron. xv. 13. 1 Sam. xiii. 13, &c.

or covenant between the Divine Persons in Jehovan. It is ordered in all things and fure.

The completion also must be of God. For, in this respect principally, it is sung of the Lord, Thou art worthy to receive glory, and honour, and power; for thou hast created all things; and for thy pleasure they are, and were created.

The house of God is anointed, and thereby consecrated to himself for ever. As an emblem of this, facob anointed a single stone for a pillar of memorial, and called it God's house \*: and for the same purpose, the tabernacle afterwards, with all its appurtenances, was ordered to be anointed with holy oil, as the place of his immediate presence. Thus God's house, or the members which compose it, are Christians; that is, persons anointed with the holy unction of God's Spirit, and thereby made unalienably his own for evermore.

This is their glory, that they are the Lord's, and not their own; that he hath purchased them to the liberty and happiness of everlasting purity, from the bondage of corruption and misery of sin; and that he keeps what he hath purchased, by the neversailing exertions of his almighty power. No thought, perhaps, could terrify them more, than the thought of being left to themselves.

\* Gen. xxviii. 17, &c,

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Except the Lord build the HOUSE, they labour in vain that build it: except the Lord keep the CITY, the watchman waketh but in vain. Believers understand this text, in its most important sense, and can apply it to purpose.

Wherever God's house is, there is also his prefence. It is never unfurnished by HIM, who filleth all in all. Hence, as a fingle stone could be the memorial of this matter, with Jacob; fo each individual believer is an anointed stone of the Lord's abode, and, because anointed, a living and a lively stone in his holy habitation. He is appointed, as well as anointed, to falvation, and therefore fhall never die, never be removed. He is a part of the Lord's everlafting memorial. Two or three met together in his name have yet more expressive tokens of his presence: and how vast then shall the joy and the demonstration be of the Lord's gracious yet aweful majesty, when all the redeemed, in one great affembly, shall constitute the spiritual house of his eternal abode? The Lord hath chosen Zion: he hath desired it for his habitation; faying, This is my rest for ever: here will I dwell, for I have defired it \*.

Into this house, when fixed in its place ordained, nothing corruptible or vile can possibly enter; no sin, no care, no forrow, nothing that can defile or disturb.

<sup>\*</sup> Psalm cxxxii. 13, 14.

Below, indeed, it is not fo. Hypocrites and unfound professors are not easily distinguished from the faithful and sincere. But though they may be in the house, during the present state, yet they are not of the house: "They may enter into the house, but are not the house itself."

As believers are the habitation of God through the Spirit, so he is their's. The point of their rest, the consummation of their faith and joy, the place of their sanctuary, is the throne of glory, the height over all from him who is the beginning, the first and the last, and who ordained all this blessedness from before the foundation of the world.

O, who can think of these things, and not be moved! Who can hope for them, and not rejoice? Who can rejoice in the prospect of this possession, and not look down with contempt upon the soolish pomps and vanities of this dying world, upon the puny cares and concerns, which agitate and teize men almost to death continually, or which plunge them into a dreadful forgetfulness of God and themselves?

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On the other hand; how should the weak and trembling believer lift up his hands that hang down, and stay his feeble knees; when this mercy, this great mercy, this transcendently great and unalienable mercy, is all open before him, and all most freely and most surely his own? If any thing ought to grieve him, it

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is his doubt of it; his poor, low, hopes; his dull, cool, defires; his drooping, unfeeling, unanimated, spirit, This should both grieve and make him ashamed; and that, after fo many precious promifes, fuch full and politive declarations, such undeniable evidence of the love and fufferings of Christ, such sure tokens of the Spirit's grace and inftruction, fuch reiterated demonstrations of the love of the Father; he should dare to imagine, that it is all in vain, or (what is the fame thing) all to no effect towards him, who feeketh no other refuge, who abhorreth and abandoneth every trust and confidence in himself, and who can truly fay, This is all my falvation, and all my defire!-From fuch an impeachment of the divine truth and honor, and from fuch a robbery of happiness to his ownself; may every believer fervently fay, Good Lord, deliver me!

## CITY OF GOD.

GLORIOUS things are spoken of thee, or, revealing in thee, O city of God! All that Jehovah hath declared in his word, all that he hath wrought upon earth, and all the astonishing mercies of redemption by his Son, have appeared and been accomplished for thy sake, in the most intimate and inseparable connection with his own glory!

This title refers to the church, both as to its original plan, and to its gradual and final execution and accomplishment. The plan is laid down in the covenant of grace. The materials are the chosen and called of God, hewn and prepared, and at length removed by him out of the world. And the city itself stands upon the holy mountain of heaven, is now building and increasing from day to day, as the redeemed are gathered in; and shall finally be perfect and complete, without the omission of one spiritual or living stone, when the last of the appointed number shall be collected and sitted for its place.

This city is called the new ferufalem, in opposition to the old, which was to vanish away; and this city is builded compact together, forming one spiritual fabric; and, though a fabric, yet a bride; and this bride the

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Lamb's

Lamb's wife \*. To express the perfection of its original design and final accomplishment, JEHOVAH, Father, Son, and Spirit, the all-wife and omnipotent architect or builder, hath described it as an exact mathematical fquare, and the fulness of its inhabitants by a perfect and fquare number, which admits neither the least defect nor redundancy. It is also called a mountain + to denote its firmness and stability. Thither the tribes go up from generation to generation, even the tribes of Jehovah, to give thanks unto his holy name, and to praise him for ever and ever ‡. They have a nail, " a constant and fure abode," in his holy place; and a wall, an appointed and measured line of building and defence, in this true Judah, and most holy Ferusalem S. It is built all of pure and precious stones, capable of freely receiving light, and of finely reflecting it, though in distinct variety when received: and this light is neither from the fun, nor the moon, nor from any creatures; but the glory of God doth lighten it, and the Lamb is the light thereof. No night can be there; and the glory and honor of the nations, even the redeemed among men, however defpifed below as diamonds in the mine by an ignorant eye, are brought into it, and rejoice with thankfgiving throughout eternity.

Thus it appears, that the people of God are citi-

<sup>\*</sup> Rev. xxi. 9. † Isa. xxv. 6. ii. 2. Pf. lxviii. 15, 16. † Pf. cxxii. § Ezra ix. 8, 9.

zens of no mean city, which they at once inhabit and compose; but are the companions of angels, kings and priests in a beautiful temple, joint-heirs with Christ's human nature of an exceeding and eternal weight of glory, and the friends and delight of JE-HOVAH himself world without end.

It is not possible, we are often told, to express or conceive the joys of this heavenly city, or union of the faithful in an inseparable life and love; and to describe the privileges of its innumerable citizens, or its distinct and individual members; and therefore we must rest upon what the Lord hath graciously revealed concerning them. Of this, however, we may be fure, that our faculties, whatever they may be in that heavenly world, shall all be pure, perfect, and sublime; and that the pure, perfect, and fublime exercise of those faculties, upon the objects fitted and appointed for them, will constitute much of our happiness. For though labour is the effect of fin, and confequently toilsome and painful to the weak and unequal powers of a finner; yet the most energetic employment of perfect beings, like the paffage of the heavenly bodies in their orbits, may blissfully unite the most constant velocity of motion or duty, with the most entire possession of tranquillity or rest. We shall, in a word, be partakers of as much felicity, as God can bestow, and we receive. The fulness, which filleth all in all, will fill every one, according to his measure, with joy unfpeakable and full of glory.

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O my foul, what hath God wrought, and wrought for thee! Who could believe, if the evidence was not clear in the word of the faithful Jehovah, and in the truth of a living experience granted by his power, that a weak dying wanderer upon earth, despicable and despised among men, poor without any thing of his own, and worthless without power or right to obtain; should be held so dear in the fight of a holy and just God, through the merit and mediation of his Son, as to be made a denizen of heaven, to be endowed with the privileges of eternal royalty among thrones and principalities and powers; to be lifted up high above falling; and to be made incessantly happy without cloving; and all freely, fully, and everlaftingly, by the arm of Omnipotence, and by the harmonious exercise of the wonderful attributes of the Godhead !- O the height and depth of this love of God! Who can utter the mighty acts of JEHOVAH? Who can shew forth all his praise?

Contemplate, my foul, this thy bleffed citizenship from day to day; go on, in heart, according to it, with faithful comfort and confidence; and, in life, pray, watch, and zealously strive to adorn and walk worthy of it; till thou be removed, from this state of exile and absence, to thy own appointed portion in that glad world, where thou shalt see thy Redeemer face to face, and be like unto him and to thy brethren with him, throughout the eternity ever before thee.

BODY

## BODY OF CHRIST.

This is a figure employed by the Holy Spirit, in the New Testament, to express the most perfect and infeparable union, which subsists between Christ and his people. It is also employed to denote the intimate communion of saints, partially in this life because of their sinful bodies, but entirely hereafter when they are complete in glory. It is a union that doth not destroy personal identity, but which consists in having a sameness of life, by immediate derivation from the Godhead through and with Christ Jesus, who is head over all to distribute this life unto all, who are in spiritual conjunction with him. The tabernacle, under the Old Testament, exhibited in figure, nearly, if not quite, a similar purpose and instruction.

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The apostle considers this important subject, with its proper inferences, in his epistle to the Corinthians. By one Spirit (says he) are we all baptized into one body, whether we be fews or Gentiles, whether we be bond or free; and have been all made to drink into one Spirit\*. That is, being baptized into Christ, we have put on Christ; so that he is now our new life, through participation of the same Spirit: and yet our personal character is not destroyed, any more than

the hand, because of its conjunction with the body, ceases not to be a hand; for the body is not one member, or one undistinguishable mass, but many members, and every one of these (as the apostle speaks in another place) members one of another \*. Believers, from age to age, are aggregately one body, as composing the church of Christ; and they are members of that body, or members of Christ who is the head of it, when considered individually in themselves.

Many noble uses are to be made of this great truth for the comfort and edification of the children of God. The figure, which represents it, was chosen by the wisdom of the Holy Ghost for this very purpose. It was not employed to delude us with a speculative fancy, but to describe, as much as earthly things may describe, a blessed and experimental reality.

In the book of God, or his covenant, were all the members of Christ written from before the foundation of the world +, which in continuance were fashioned, or, what days they should be fashioned, when as yet there was none of them †. Accordingly God is said to foreknow his people, and, foreknowing them, to have given them to Christ. He saw them as his own, while they existed only in secret; and he considered them, according to the everlasting covenant, as in Christ before time began, and as members of Christ,

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<sup>\*</sup> Eph. iv. 25. + Eph. i. 5. Rev. xvii, 8.

<sup>\* ‡</sup> Pf. cxxxix. 16.

for whom he was (in the view of the same covenant) the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world\*. This was their election of God, who declareth the end from the beginning, and from ancient times [DDD, from before all time] the things that are not yet done, saying, My counsel shall stand, and I will do all my pleasure †.

These being Christ's own, given of the Father to him as their God-man-mediator, he prayed, or interceded with his divine merits, for them, but not for the world, that they may be one, even as God and Christ are one; God in Christ, and Christ in God, that they also may be one in them; Christ in them, and God in Christ, that they may be made perfect in one; and that the glory which was given to Christ, and the love wherewith the Father loved him, may be given to them and be in them, and he in them as their life and hope of glory t. According to this divine plan, when Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, the antient prophecy, by that act, was faid to be fulfilled, Thou art my Son, this day have I begotten thee. This related to Christ as the head of his body the church, proving him to be the appointed first-born among many brethren, who, by this glorious demonstration of his victory and finished falvation, and by the power of this refurrection, are entitled to

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<sup>\*</sup> Rev. xiii. 8.

<sup>†</sup> Isa. xlvi. 10.

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become the fons of God in him, and are faid therefore to be begotten, by that very deed, to a lively hope through the mercy of God\*. Alluding to this, the apostle says, that God hath RAISED US UP TOGE-THER, and made us SIT TOGETHER in heavenly places in Christ Jesus. We are quickened with Christ, raised up together with him, and made to sit together, as one body, one entire substance, upon one abiding ground, ev Tois emegaviois, in the Super-heavenlies, in that which is above the שמים, or natural heavens, even in the spiritual שמים or אלהים, the immediate presence of the divine persons in Jehovah, of whom the other are the constituted figure +. Thus, the divine nature was called by the Jews, was " the name of the heavens;" i. e. the invisible reality and archetype of what these are only the sensible image and picture. Thus, the kingdom of heaven, distinguished into the rule of grace and providence, is the spiritual purpose of the heavens in the glory of God and falvation of his people. All this shews the great provision and certainty of their holy calling, or high vocation, and that it shall proceed to the several effects, described by the apostle in that glorious order, with which he comforts the believing Romans, and with them other believers to the end of time t.

Upon this mighty and wonderful foundation, the

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<sup>\*</sup> Acts xiii. 33. 1 Pet. i. 3. Rom. i. 4. † Eph. ii. 6. † Rom. viii. 28—39.

members of Christ's mystical body have a rightful claim, under their head and in conjunction with him, to all the mercies, graces, and bleffings of God's everhafting covenant, which the revelation of his word hath fet before them. They have a right to these both as a body and as individuals; for whatever belongs to the whole, belongs to every part in its place and order. They come, therefore, to the throne of grace, not as flaves, but as freemen; not as fervants, but as children; not as mere expectants, but as undoubted heirs, yea, as heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ Jesus. Accordingly, the apostle speaks of the believer's privilege in this respect, as a wappnoia, an open, clear, evidential, liberty or boldness; an access to God with confidence and full dependance by the faith of Christ \*:-- a liberty, founded upon an indefeafable right, and used with the confiding freedom of a lawful and undoubted fon. We cannot therefore ask, in submission to the divine will and agreeable to the divine word, more than what Christ hath purchased for us, or more than what God hath promifed to bestow in him and through him: and we cannot ask this with too great frequency, or too much allurance of faith. Our heavenly Father loves the ardent, holy, importunity of his children +.

Union with Christ implies communion of life, sen-

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<sup>\*</sup> Eph. iii. 12. Heb. iv. 16. † Luke xviii. 1. ii. 1—13. Matt. vii. 7, xxi. 22.

timents, and manners, with Christ. As every member of the natural body is actuated immediately by the head; fo every member of Christ's mystical body is guided by his wifdom, and receives all true nourishment and activity from him, as being the fource of life to all that believe. It would be ftrange, indeed, were the head and the body to live by different principles, go different ways, act for separate purposes, and come There is no fuch schism as this in to different ends. Christ's spiritual body. His members hold, and hold fast too (as the word fignifies) their life-giving HEAD, from which ALL the body, by joints and bands having nourishment ministered and knit together, increaseth with the increase of God \*. They have the same fpirit and life with Christ; and therefore they are in their place and measure like unto him. It is their great defire to be more and more like unto him; and for this purpose they are enabled to live more dependently upon him. As a man cannot be truly like Christ, but through him; fo none are his, or at least have any visible token that they are his, but those who walk according to this rule, and who strive even to perfect boliness in the fear of God.

Through union with Christ, there is not only life, but fafety by him. The head hath pre-eminently all the discerning faculties in it for the use of the body. Christ watches over his people; and his eye is ever

\* Col. ii. 19.

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upon them and guides them. He succors them by his almighty power; making his strength perfect and illustrious, in all their wants and weakness. No enemy can delude him, nor his elect, essentially, in him \*: No weapon, formed against either, shall prosper; and every tongue, that shall rise in judgement against them, will God condemn. This is the heritage of the servants of Jehovah; and their righteousness is of me, saith Jehovah †.

And all this safety necessarily infers victory, perfeverance, and everlasting glory, through this gracious head and Redeemer. It is impossible for the whole creation to overcome the head; and therefore the members must prevail. As Christ endureth ever; so those, who are in him, shall also endure to the end and be saved. The inheritance, the kingdom, the crown, even, an exceeding and eternal weight of glory, are reserved in heaven for the joint-heirs of Christ, by the faithfulness and omnipotence of Jehovah their Saviour; and therefore there is an inestable security for their faith and hope, that they shall not trust in vain, but that the believers themselves shall be reserved too, for the enjoyment of what their Lord hath promised to them.

O believer! to what an high and gracious state art thou called! How unworthy then would thy con-

<sup>\*</sup> Matt. xxiv. 24.

<sup>†</sup> Ifa. liv. 17.

duct be of fuch a gracious Lord, wert thou to go drooping and doubting all the day long! But how much more shameful, to prostitute a member of Christ to the drudgery and baseness of the devil!

No: love to Christ must follow, invariably, the knowledge and possession of him. If Christ be in us, the body is dead, or in a subdued state, because of sin; but the spirit is life, and life daily renewed, because of righteousness. "No man (says the judicious Hooker) is in Christ, but he in whom Christ actually is \*." And the actuality is chiefly discovered by the activity. Love is a swift and willing motion of the soul, which kindles every energy into quickness and diligence; and, consequently, they, who love Christ, will most chearfully do the things that he says. Their obedience will be from love, and very much according to the measure of it.

Next to this, the love to Christ's members will be a certain consequence of the love of his person. They will be loved for his sake and for their own. Our Lord taught us this love, when he taught us to pray. We are not directed to say, My Father, individually, though it be a truth; but, Our Father, in common with all his people: for each member, as a part of the whole, ought to pray for the whole body; as the whole body, in the same words, is enjoined to pray for

<sup>\*</sup> Eccl. Pol. B. v.

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every particular member. By this rule, a reciprocal affection is inculcated; and, by this practice, it is diffused and maintained. The great affection of the primitive disciples astonished their adversaries, and drew from them that honorable testimony; "See how these Christians love one another!" They called each other (following the scripture) by the endearing name of brethren and sisters; till, in short, their fellowship and brotherhood were titles, which stood for and signified the Church itself. Amiable example! The bitter hatred and persecution of the world gave only a contrast of shade to that fair and blessed light, which it could not obscure or destroy.

Something of this kind not unfrequently occurs in the meeting of real Christians, who perhaps never heard of or saw each other before in their lives. An hint about Christ or his salvation, like a spark of fire, shall kindle the slame of fellowship; and the discourse, drawn out into the detail of heart-felt experience, shall confirm a regard, to which the men of this world are strangers, and of which they are surprized to hear. An instance of this kind, I well remember, passed a few years since in a foreign land; which, though it hath been already published, I will take leave to insert in this place, as one proof among many of the remark, which I have been making.

Some years ago an English gentleman, by a particular providence, had occasion to be in North Ame-

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rica, where, among other adventures, the following circumstance occurred to him, which is thus related in his own words.

"Every day's observation convinces me, that the children of God are made so by his own especial grace and power, and that all means, whether more or less, are equally effectual with him, whenever he is pleased to employ them for conversion.

" In one of my excursions, while I was in the province of New York, I was walking by myself over a confiderable plantation, amused with its husbandry, and comparing it with that of my own country, till I came within a little diftance of a middle-aged negro, who was tilling the ground. I felt a strong inclination, unusual with me, to converse with him. After asking him some little questions about his work, which he answered very fensibly, I wished him to tell me, whether his state of flavery was not difagreeable to him, and whether he would not gladly exchange it for his liberty. " Massah, (faid he, looking seriously upon me) I have wife and children; my maffah takes care of them, and I have no care to provide any thing; · I have a good maffah, who teach me to read; and read good book, that makes me happy." I am glad, replied I, to hear you fay so; and pray what is the good book you read? " The Bible, maffah, God's own good book?" Do you understand, friend, as well as read this book? for many can read the words well, who cannot

cannot get hold of the true and good fenfe. massah, says he, I read the book much before I underfland; but at last I felt pain in my heart; I found things in the book that cut me to pieces." Aye, fays I, and what things were they? " Why, massah, I found that I had bad heart; massah, a very bad heart indeed: I felt pain, that God would destroy me, because I was wicked, and done nothing as I should do. God was holy, and I was very vile and naughty; fo I could have nothing from him but fire and brimftone in hell."- In short, he entered into a full account of his convictions of fin, which were indeed as deep and piercing as almost any I had ever heard of; and what scriptures came to his mind, which he had read, that both probed him to the bottom of his finful heart, and were made the means of light and comfort to his foul. I then enquired of him, what ministry or means he made use of, and found that his master was a Quaker, a plain fort of man, who had taught his flaves to read, but who had not, however, even conversed with this negro upon the state of his foul. I asked him likewise, how he got comfort under all this trial? " O massiah, says he, it was Christ gave me comfort by his dear word. He bade me come unto him, and he would give me reft, for I was very weary and heavy laden." And here he went through a line of the most precious texts in the bible, shewing me, by his artless comment upon them as he went along, what great things God had done in the course of some E 2 years

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years for his foul. Being rather more acquainted with doctrinal truths, and the analogy of the Bible, than he had been, or in his fituation could eafily be; I had a mind to try how far a simple, untutored experience, graciously given without the usual means, could carry a man from fome speculative errors; and I therefore asked him feveral questions about the merit of works, the justification of a finner, the power of grace, and the like. I own, I was as much aftonished at, as I admired, the fweet spirit and simplicity of his answers, with the heavenly wisdom that God had put into the mind of this negro. His discourse, slowing merely from the richness of grace, with a tenderness and expression, far " beyond the reach of art," perfectly charmed me. On the other hand, my entering into all his feelings, together with an account to him, which he had never heard before, that thus and thus the Lord in his mercy dealt with all his children, and had dealt with me, drew streams of joyful tears down his black face, that we looked upon each other, and talked with that inexpressible glow of christian affection, that made me more than ever believe, what I have often too thoughtlefsly professed to believe, the communion of faints. I shall never forget, how the poor excellent creature feemed to hang upon my lips, and to eat my very words, when I enlarged upon the love of Christ to poor sinners, the free bounty and tender mercy of God, the frequent and

and delightful fense he gives of his presence, the faith he bestows in his promises, the victories this faith is enabled to get over trials and temptations, the joy and peace in believing, the hope in life and death, and the glorious expectation of immortality. To have taken off his eager, delighted, animated, air and manner, would have been a masterpiece for a Reynolds. had never heard fuch discourse, nor found the opportunity of hearing it, before. He feemed like a man who had been thrown into a new world, and at length had found company. Though my conversation lasted, at least, two or three hours, I scarce ever enjoyed the happy swiftness of time so sweetly in all my life. We knew not how to part. He would accompany me as far as he might; and I felt, on my fide, fuch a delight in the artless, savory, solid, unaffected experience of this dear foul, that I could have been glad to fee him oftenthen, or to fee his like at any time now. But my fituation rendered this impossible. I therefore took an affectionate adieu, with an ardor equal to the warmest and the most antient friendship, telling him, that neither the colour of his body, nor the condition of his present life, could prevent him from being my dear brother in our dear Saviour; and that, though we must part now, never to see each other again any more in this world, I had no doubt of our having another joyful meeting in our Father's home, where we should live together, and love one another, E 3 through-

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throughout a long and a happy eternity. "Amen, Amen, my dear massah; God bless you, and poor me too for ever and ever." If I had been an angel from heaven, he could not have received me with more evident delight then he did; nor could I have considered him with a more sympathetic regard, if he had been a long-known Christian of the good old fort, grown up into my affections in the course of many years."

Happy world, if all were Christians! Or, at least, happy Christians, if they shewed more of this fraternal affection to each other in the world? None can deny, that so it ought to be: O that every one, who nameth the name of Christ, and believes himself to be a member of his undivided body, would pray for faith and charity to put the whole into being!

Bleffed Lord! Fountain of life and love, fend forth the Spirit of thy Son into my heart and into the hearts of all my brethren; that, waving all mean and felfish distinctions, we may first love thee above all things, and then each other for 'thy sake with a pure heart fervently. Subdue animosities, and all the separating corruptions of the slesh, and let us consider ourselves as brethren, fellow heirs of the grace of life, persons who shall pass an eternity together, yea, as parts of each other, and members, holy Jesus, of thy body, thy slesh, and thy bones. Even so, let it be, for thy glory and for our present and eternal consolation through thy grace! Amen.

## CHRISTIANS.

An honorable title indeed, taken from the Redeemer himself! The disciples of the Lord Jesus were first called by this name at Antioch\*; but the sense of the name belonged to the children of God from the beginning of the world. As the word Christ signifies anointed, i.e. by the Holy Spirit; so the word Christians denotes properly those, and those only, who are anointed by the same Spirit, and thereby follow him in the regeneration. Thus the patriarchs were called anointed, because of their relation to the Messiah, (which is the Hebrew word for Christ): touch not mine anointed, and do my prophets no harm †. They were Christians, through saith in their Saviour, by the unction of the Holy one;

† Pfalm cv. 15.

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<sup>\*</sup> This was about the year of our Lord 44: before this time, the disciples were styled, in contempt, Nazarenes and Galilaans. And to shew to us, that our Lord considers the reproach of the world as the truest honor; he made himself known to Paul, at his conversion, by the despited name of Jesus of Nazareth. The Jews, therefore, in contemning Christ, and hating his people, have only brought upon themselves, in this instance, the fulfilment of that prophecy, which declared that they should leave their name [the name of Jew] for a curse unto God's chosen, and that the Lord God would slay them, and call his servants by another name. Isa. lxv. 15.

and none others have, in truth and reality, a right to the name. This oil of gladness first descends upon Christ, and then from him, the head and high priest of the great profession, to the meanest and lowest of his true members, or to the last of them who shall come into the world, even to those who, in these respects, may be styled, in prophetic figure, the skirts of his clothing \*.

It appears from hence, that it is no fuch flight or common thing, as too many suppose, to be a Christian. If we consider the Author: it is the gift of God, and the action of God himself, upon that person, who is possessed of the truth implied by the name. If we consider the blessing: it is an oil most holy, as was declared in the type, by which the redeemed are consecrated; and never yet was thrown away upon men continuing ungodly and prosane to Those, who live under the dominion of sin, prove demonstrably, that it hath never yet been poured upon them. Wherever it is poured forth, it makes holy,

<sup>\*</sup> Psalm exxxiii. 2. † This was signified by the precept; upon man's flesh it shall not be poured, Exod. xxx. 32. The corrupt slesh or nature of man is not the object of this unction; for slesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God, because in the slesh dwelleth no good thing; but the new man, who is created anew in Christ Jesus, or is born again of the Spirit, is the only subject of this divine anointing, and is thereby made the priest consecrated to God, and capable of union and communion with him.

and keeps holy. It is an oil of confecration, which devotes the foul to God, brings the foul by faith into the presence of God, enjoins him to walk continually as in that presence, admits him to communion and love with the Father and Son, enables him to live in the sense of the gracious privileges conferred upon him, renews the mind into the image of Christ, causes it to rejoice in the holy and righteous will of Jehovah, and inspires a gracious longing and waiting for the purity as well as peace of the kingdom of glory. If fomething of this, at least, be not found in a man; or if, where supposed to be found, there be no strong desire for an increase of it; let such an one beware, lest, inflead of being anointed with the Spirit of Christ, and being fealed with the feal of God in his forehead \*, he bear the mark only of the beast, and be found among those that are deceived +. If any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his: that is, he is not a Christian, and hath no right to the name.

He, who is anointed by the Spirit of Christ, or, what is the same, is a Christian indeed, hath the mind or understanding of Christ, discerns the truth of God in his word, apprehends the great analogy or proportion of faith which runs through the scriptures, tastes the sweet savour of the gospel, that hidden manna, which none can know but he that eats it, and rejects, as

<sup>\*</sup> Rev. ix. 4.

<sup>†</sup> Rev. xix. 20.

nauseous and vile, every false or adulterated principle, and all the perverse disputings of men of corrupt minds, who are destitute both of the truth and its power.

As the real Christian hath an understanding which is true, and which fixes his judgement upon all effential truth; so his will and affections are correspondent with it. He loves the things of God, and the people of God, without narrowness of spirit; because the love of God is shed abroad in his heart by that Holy One, who made him a Christian. If God love any person or thing; how can he, who is of God, venture or be inclined to do otherwise?

The life of Christ also is manifested in the mortal body of every true Christian, subduing the corruptions of that body, and thereby delivering the soul from a multitude of snares and inquietudes. I (says the apostle, respecting the body, with its affections and lusts) I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live [i. e. as to my soul]; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me: and the life which I now live in the sless, I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me\*. He found the second Adam, the Lord from heaven, not like Adam the first, a mere natural man, but the Lord of life itself, and therefore a quickening Spirit: and he proved his interest in him, by living upon him, (not upon himself, or his own poor corrupted nature)

Gal. ii. 20.

and by receiving out of his fulness, from moment to moment, grace for grace. This is the life and spirit, the wisdom and strength, the happiness and holiness, of the Christian: and all the rest is nothing but a fair shew in the FLESH, if it pretend to religion; or a foul shew, if it follow the world.

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The sum, then, of this matter is, that the holy unction, which makes a Christian, is the gift of God, and that the persons, who receive this grace, are devoted by it to God for ever, are renewed in the spirit of their minds, and from henceforth walk in the ways of truth and holiness, through the power and wisdom of that holy unction, according to the measure bestowed, till they reach the place of their destination in heaven.

The clear view and experience of this matter, confirmed and sealed by the Spirit of grace, afford an inestimable and invincible consolation to the soul. To know Christ, to be anointed by him, to be found in him, to live upon him, to receive continual supplies of strength, wisdom, love and righteousness from him, and to have the proof and demonstration of this, arising to the conscience and appearing in the life, forms such a conjunction of evidence as amounts to that full assurance of faith, hope, and understanding, which is the privilege, and must be the pursuit, of the children of God. It is this, which has animated many a heart E 6

under all the perfecution and outrage of the world, and foftened many a fick and dying bed, when nothing else could afford consolation. How often hath it been feen, that, while nature has been finking, and the outward man, with his faculties, has lost all his strength, with an admirable vigor of joy the foul hath been enabled to rife, to exult, to triumph, to look forward into, and even to taste, the very nature and enjoyments of another world! There instances have not only often occured, but may occur again and again; and perhaps may be found even in thee, O believer, who readest with longing concern any thing, which relates to the faithfulness of thy Lord, or to thy fellowship with him. Fear not; the promise is fure to all the feed, I will never leave thee nor forfake thee; and whether the joy come to thee before death or not, thou wilt furely go to it in the next moment afterwards. Thou shalt then have, not only the fulness of joy, but the duration of it for ever.

And O what a scene shall then be presented to the expanded faculties of the soul, newly released from the house of clay; what a burst of glory fall upon the spirit of a christian, on his abundant entrance into the heavenly kingdom! It will be more than springing from a cold dark dungeon into the warm meridian day. The hand of God, which covered Moses, can then alone bear up the saint, though sull

of vigor by deliverance from fin, and enable him to fustain the exceeding and eternal weight of bliss and brightness, of which, as an heir come to age, he enters at once into the full possession. A gracious man, in the circumstance we call dying, felt such an anticipation of this unutterable bleffedness, that, with fome of the last efforts of his finking voice, he could not help crying out;" O my God! O that joy! when shall I be with thee \*!"-Reader, may fomething like this be thy dying testimony to the truth and fweetness of Jesus's falvation, that others may be edified by the remembrance of thee, and be preparing to follow thee; whilst thou shalt be singing, in a higher world, as thou canst not fing here, the honor, the love, the mercy, the praife, of thy gracious Lord and God Redeemer!

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CHOSEN.

<sup>\*</sup> See BURNHAM's Pious Memorials, p. 111. fecond edition.

## CHOSEN.

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THERE is scarce any one truth more manifest in the scriptures than this, that God hath an elect or chosen people, taken and redeemed from the world, and ordained through Christ to everlasting life and glory. It is declared, and continually declared, in word and deed, in doctrine and example, by the testimony of patriarchs, prophets, and apostles, of Christ and of God, and by the concurrent effect and experience of its reality in the hearts of believers from age to age, who have known and rejoiced in his precious falvation. And yet, because of its opposition to the pride and blind conceit of fallen nature, no one truth is more offensive in itself, or more detested by those, who know not the plague of their own hearts, and who therefore scan all things by the line of a dark and corrupted reason. The felf-sufficient spirit of the natural man cannot endure or fubmit to a truth, though it be God's own positive truth, which proposes to strip him of all his own confequence, and to lay him as a wretched, worthless, helpless, sinner in the dust of contrition and felf-abhorrence. This "affronts his reason," affronts his dignity, affronts his nature, affronts all that is in him or belongs to him. He will **Aruggle** 

struggle hard for a little, if but a little, portion, some little understanding, some little ability, natural at least if not moral, in the business of salvation; and can never let go this proud and rotten principle of his corrupt and deluded heart, till divine power hath swept away both this and every other refuge of lies from within him. If he cannot, out of some reverence to the bible, go the length of the Sadducees and Pelagians, and deny all manner of predestination; he will at least halve the matter with the Pharifees and Semi-arminians, and contend for a strong conjunction with it of man's own free-will and power. What a malicious indignation was stirred up in the hearts of the Jews, when our Lord preached the entire fovereignty of God, in paffing by the widows of Ifrael, and felecting a Gentile widow of Sarepta; in rejecting the Israelitish lepers, and preferring such an one as NAAMAN the SYRIAN? Their fouls feemed on fire by this declaration; and, being filled with bloody wratl:, they attempted to destroy the Redeemer. And the heart of man is the fame to this day: no one truth affects it with more enmity or bitterness. The writer of these lines freely owns, that he himself once hated it with a perfect hatred, and blasphemed it, by word and pen, with all his might. But God vouchfafed mercy, and fo triumphed over the ignorance and unbelief of his mind, as to render that, which once

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was his fcorn, one of the sweetest and most substantial grounds of all his peace.

This choice of God refults from his own will: and the exercise of it superinduces, with a bland volition, the will of man. Of his own will (favs the apostle) begat he us, &c. His children, respecting their spiritual or new birth, are born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God. And this will of God proceeds not according to the worth or excellency, either present or foreseen, in man; because nothing of this kind can be really in him, till God shall have been pleased to place it there: and therefore Christ fays, I thank thee, O Father, Lord of heaven and earth, that thou hast hid these things from the wise and prudent, and hast revealed them unto babes, poor simple ones either found fuch or made fuch; and he gives no other reason or rule for this conduct but one, which ought to filence all the rash forwardness and prefumption of man; Even fo, Father, for fo it feemed good in thy fight. Thus Jehovah himself to Moses; I will be gracious to whom I will be gracious, and will shew mercy on whom I will shew mercy. To this may be added the words of the apostle; Ye fee your calling, brethren, how that not many wife men after the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble, are called: But God hath chosen the foolish things of the world to confound the wife; and God bath chosen the weak things of the zvorld,

world to confound the things which are mighty; and base things of the world, and things which are despised hath God chosen, yea, and things which are not, to bring to nought things which are; that no sless should glory in his presence. It is manifest, then, from these two or three texts, out of a thousand which might be quoted, that there is a people chosen to salvation out of the mass of mankind, (for, if all are redeemed, there can be no possible choice or election of any) and that all the causes of it are in God's free love and mercy on the one hand, and in his justice and holy judgement on the other. They, who will presume to go beyond or astray from these, in their representations of his conduct, do and must wander at their peril.

The proof of this truth also stands upon fact. What rendered ABEL's offering more acceptable than CAIN's? We are told by the Apostle, that it was faith. Heb. xi. Now, faith is the gift of God, which was bestowed upon him, and not upon his brother; and therefore it was, that the one was accepted and righteous, and the other left to the naked form of an empty profession. Cain, like the Pharisees in the gospel, brought his outward tythe or offering to God, and seemed willing to bring it; but bringing that only, and no faith with it, it was wholly an abomination to the Lord. So NOAH found grace in the eyes of the Lord. Gen. vi. 8. And thus he, likewise.

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likewise, became a just man, and perfect \* in his generations, walking with God. It was the free grace of God, which called ABRAHAM, then an idolater, from his father's idolatrous house; which gave him saith to believe the promise of selection to himself; which strengthened that saith against staggering in his suture trials; and which enabled him, in the same saith, to seek a higher seed, and a better inheritance, than Isaac or Canaan. It was the appointment of God which ordained Isaac, and not Ishmael; which loved faceb, and not Esau; even before they were born, and had done neither good nor evil, to be heirs of promise and salvation. By the same grace of God, Judah was preferred to Reuben the sirst-born, and Joseph, for the time, to all his brethren. Upon the

<sup>\*</sup> oron-one, whom the grace of God had made complete in Christ, and of the perfest number redeemed by him. The precious stones, in the breast-plate of the high-priest, on which the names of the tr bes were engraved, were thus called .- There is another word owo or also translated perfect, which, applied to persons, denotes them taught of God, or absolved from their fins. The Jewish schools also used the word run for those disciples who had received their full and complete erudition, and were to be distinguished from the novices or mere tyros. In this sense the apostle employed the word Telesos, in Phil. iii. 15. for persons who have made such a folid proficiency in divine things, as not to be carried away with swinds of dostrine, nor to be feduced and baffled by the arts of men. The Pythagoreans also used the term Texasos for those, who were fully initiated in the principles of their philosophy.

same principle, Moses (receiving his name as an emblem of God's people, who are all drawn by his appointment out of the water, or mass of the people in the world) was ordained of God to plead the cause of Ifrael, though he was not naturally eloquent, but flow of speech, and of a slow tongue. God overcame this impediment, strengthened the feebleness of age (for he was then fourscore) and enabled him both then and through the course of his life to do, what fallen unaffifted nature never could have done, even to refuse a kingdom and the honors of this world, to choose rather to fuffer affliction, and to esteem the reproach of Christ greater riches than the treasures of Egypt. In a word, passing over other private examples, such as those of David, Jeremiah, the apostles, &c. God's free-will chose the people of Ifrael in general, from among and out of the people of the world, as a prophetic and emblematic nation, which should exhibit in many respects the course of his conduct towards the true and spiritual Israel: and these were expressly chofen, not because they were better or more numerous than others, but because the Lord chose them to be a special people unto himself \*, and only because it pleased him so to do, even though they were a fiff-necked people, and consequently had no right more than others to his favor.

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<sup>\*</sup> Deut. vii. 6, &c. ix. 4, &c

This great truth, then, of the election of grace stands upon the record of God, and upon the action of God. It by no means is referable to human reason or capacity, and needs no justification from it. The Lord never intended, that the intellect of angels should comprehend his wisdom, into which at the most they can only pry: and how much less then can the darkened, depraved reason of man sit in judgement upon it? Of this we may be sure, because he himself hath assured us, that God cannot say or do what is wrong, whether we comprehend it or not.

If it be asked, as it hath often been asked, "What becomes of all other people, who are not the subjects of this election?" No answer can or ought to be given, than what the voice of inspiration has assorted, and what an apostle observed; What have I to do to judge them that are without?—Them that are without, God judgeth\*. Is MY OWN election sure?

Believers know, and are ever ready to own with humble gratitude, that God began with them, not they with God +; that it was of his mercy alone

<sup>\*</sup> I Cor. v. 12, 13. † It is the just remark of an able writer, that "fome there are, so unhappy as to mistake the economy of God, both in the natural and moral world. If you will take their judgment, God, as a natural ruler, is to have the task of moving these portions of matter which are moved and ruled by the sun, the work of his hands: while man is to assume the office of the Father of spirits, and administer light

he faved and called them, plucking them as brands from the fire, and quickening them from the death of fin; that they had no inclination to him till his grace bestowed it, but, on the contrary, a total alienation in all their faculties and powers; that he gave them life from the dead through Christ, and maintains it in them by Christ, insomuch that, spiritually and towards God, they cannot properly be faid to live by themselves, or by their own strength, wisdom, or faithfulness, but that Christ liveth in them; that all their graces are his gifts from their first seed to their final consummation, Christ being the alpha and omega of the whole; that all this, confequently, must have proceeded from the free love of God, in taking them and leaving others; that this free love must have risen from himself, because they had nothing previous to its manifestation in them, but fin and wretchedness in their whole nature, and were thereby incapable of changing, or defiring to change, their state; that God knowing all this, for

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to his own understanding. In religion, which is the province of the Deity, and where there is a dignus vindice nodus, all is to be natural; but, in nature, all effects are to be miraculous. Thus wretchedly will men reason, when they think philosophy hath advanced men into a sphere, superior to the unphilosophizing simplicity and truth of divine revelation." See a very ingenious and excellent work, entitled An Essay on the sirst Principles of Natural Philosophy, by the Rev. W. Jones. p, 239.

all things are known to him from the foundation of the world, he could not act in this case upon contingency or accident, nor suffer the precious blood of Christ to be hazarded in its efficacy; and that, consequently, he foreknew his people, the subjects of that efficacy, and the purchase of that blood, and, foreknowing them, he also did predestinate them to be conformed to the image of his Son; and whom he did predestinate them he also called; and whom he called, them he also justified; and whom he justified, them he also glorified. What shall we then say to these things? If God be for us, and hath wrought all this in us, who can be against us, or of what avail is human contradiction or resistance \*?

\* All these things being duly and graciously confidered, there feems to be no foundation for the novel and metaphyfical distinction between the moral and natural ability of condemned and perishing sinners, who therefore have no sufficiency of themselves so much as to think one good thought, and much less to put it into Two or three passages of scripture cut the exercise. controversy very short, to the no small mortification of that proud and unsubdued reason, which naturally affects rather to fee and dispute than to trust and believe. All that the Father giveth me SHALL COME to me. This .s election and effectual vocation. Therefore they COULD NOT believe, BECAUSE be [God] bath blinded their eyes, &c. This is the preterition or reprobation. both this choice and this rejection are simply and repeatedly, in these and other scriptures, applied to God; not merely as the deficient but efficient cause, and certainly without implying that he is or can be the author of fin. If, then, one part of mankind, must come, be-

The believer doth not ascend up into heaven to know, whether his name be written in the Lamb's book of life; but the word, and the proof and experience of his interest in the word and all that it reveals of grace and glory, is nigh him, in his mouth, and in his heart. He proves his election by his vocation; as the worldling proves his reprobation by his final impenitency. God having raifed the believer from the death of fin through Christ, or made him a partaker of Christ's resurrection, he liveth to God, and upon God in Christ with faith and holiness, and thus rejoices in hope, that, God having renewed him in the spirit of his mind, and drawn him with loving-kindness and mercy, THEREFORE he hath loved him with an everlasting love. This argument, standing upon the immutability and eternity of the Godhead, holds firmly in all its parts, and, in conjunction with his revealed will, looks backward and

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cause God hath ordained that they shall come; and that others cannot come, because he, who hath rejected the whole world of fallen angels, hath rejected that part of fallen men; who and what is the daring worm, who can venture to dispute, by his blinded reason, against the holy and supreme determination of God? Who is wicked enough to say to him, What doest thou? Who is presumptuous enough, by distinctions coined to please the corrupt imaginations of men, to fritter away or obscure the positive and plain declarations of him, who can do nothing but what is right, and who, beyond his own will, giveth not account of any of his matters?

forward

forward with equal truth and force. He, that loved without beginning, will love without end. He that contrived to fave his elect, when finners, from all eternity, will preferve them, when faved and made faints, to all eternity. And God hath revealed this plain theory, as a clue to the progression of our experience, and as a ray of light for our comfort; and none can confistently oppose it, but those who have no interest in the matter. If such, following their own corrupt reason, indulge themselves in the deepest speculations upon this subject which reason is capable of: they may puzzle themselves indeed, but can conclude nothing certain, apart from divine revelation, but this one thing, that they have attempted to be wife above what is written, through the rebellion of their minds against what is written.

To real Christians, " to godly persons and such as feel in themselves the working of the Spirit of Christ, the godly consideration of predestination and our election in Christ is full of sweet, pleasant and unspeakable comfort;" and to such only, because they experience the thing, and enjoy it, not as a curious dry speculation, but as a perceptible sact. For this end, Christ himself was the chosen, or elect, of God, with respect to his human nature, that he might be the head over all things to his church; and his church, the proper members of that head were chosen in him, and ordained, that they might make up one body, one build-

ing, one temple in the Lord. What perfection of arrangement, what certainty, what comfort, what dignity, in the clear view and divine perception of this great plan, in which Jehovah in his perfons and offices stands immutably engaged, are seen to appertain to the whole houshold of faith, and to every individual member and branch of the sacred family! The excellency of such an object is enough to charm the heart into the love of it, and always charms it indeed, when through grace, the beauty of the workmanship and the glorious faithfulness of the agent are experimentally known.

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O how wonderful is the love, how full of condescension and mercy, which could rescue so worthless a worm, as I naturally am, from the jaws of defruction! which could refcue me too at fo great a coft, as the fufferings and death of the Son of God; and all this, not by an accidental pity over my misery which might or might not have confidered my deplorable state, but by an all-wife, an all-perfect, an everlafting defign, planned in the councils of the Almighty, before this world and this nature of mine were made! Who can express the debt I feel to Father, Son, and Spirit, the triune Godhead, for enrolling my poor name in the covenant of grace; for recording my wants, my peace, my falvation, in the heavenly records; for writing all I am and all I hope in the Lamb's book of life, indelibly as on the rock for ever! The con-

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fidence, the affurance, which the Lord hath afforded of this perfect and unalterable mercy, what world, what millions of worlds, can counter-balance or purchase? and how much do I loofe, how poorly do I live, when the fense of this glorious favor, this inestimable good, doth not dwell in me richly in all the wifdom and truth of the word of God? This perfuasion was an apostle's joy, that he knew WHOM he had believed, that he was able to keep all that he had committed to him, and that nothing should separate him from the love of Christ; and O that it may be mine! May I look back from the prefent instance of thine effectual calling, O my God, to that provision of thine to which nothing could be unknown, and to that pre-ordination, without which no good could arife, and blefs and adore thee, that, weak and worthless as I am in myself, thou didst choose me in my Redeemer before the world began, that I should be holy and without blame before thee in love, according to the good pleasure of thy will, and that I should obtain falvation through Jefus Christ to thy glory! O that this dignity, to which I am thus bountifully raifed, may impress my heart with grateful awe, and wonder, and love; and may I be enabled to shew, that indeed I am thus raifed, to be a king and a priest in the regions of immortality, by a gracious superiority over felf, the world, and fin. May this true greatness and sublimity of mind, very remote in its nature from the false and foolish pride of a fallen heart.

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fallen heart, heart, lead me to just reflections upon my spiritual station, and make me very careful not to disgrace it by improper company, thoughts, words, or actions. And as the throne of glory, the height from the beginning is the place of my fanctuary \*; may I have life and power continually dealt out to me, from the divine fulness, to walk worthy of the high vocation wherewith I am called! May I have a noble contempt for every thing, which would either ftop my course or deaden my heart, in my passage towards my crown; and may I learn more and more to count all things but dung and drofs, when put in competition with the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord! Thus may I walk as the elect of God on earth, and at length obtain my incorruptible inheritance with the fellow-members of my Saviour's mystic body, when I shall be both perfectly like to him in all things, and (to give a full emphasis to all my joy) shall for ever be with him!

\* Jer. xvii. 12.

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ADOPTED.

## ADOPTED,

Persons, adopted into a family, were, according to antient laws, entitled to all the privileges, and subject to all the restrictions, which children of the same blood were born to \*.

Agreeable to this well-known transaction in common life, God is represented as the great adopter of those who are brought into the bond of the covenant, and made partakers of its bleffings. They were once of another family, or rather of no family at all, being, like Cain, vagabonds, fugitives, wanderers, in the mental fense, upon the wilderness of this earth, in a folitary way, finding no city to dwell in +; but God, who is rich in mercy, took them from this fearful state, adopted them into his family, and provided for them accordingly, He found them filthy; but he made them clean: he knew them to be enemies; but he turned them into friends: he gave them the Spirit of his children, filling their hearts with love and gratitude to himself, and with cordial affection to all that belong to him.

They could not, being enemies, adopt themselves:

<sup>\*</sup> See more concerning the nature and privileges of adoption, in Hor. Solit. Vol. ii. p. 241. † Pf. cvii. 4.

they had no more inclination than power for any fuch mercy. The defign, the act, the accomplishment, were altogether of JEHOVAH, who foreknew them, when to no creature they could possibly be known, and foreordained them to be faved by that immaculate Lamb, who, for their fakes, in the purpose and fight of God, was a Lamb flain from before the foundation of the world. These are the brethren beloved, who know their election to be of God; and to these the gospel came not in word only, but also in power, and in the Holy Ghoft, and in much affurance.

This great truth the men of the earth cannot understand or commune with, and therefore seek and expect no interest in it. But it is the clear and sweet voice of that unerring wisdom, which is justified of all her children. The creation of the world itself is not more expressly revealed, than this adoption of the children of God from among the men of the world. The fcorn of the multitude demonstrates that they have no interest in the thing; and their having no interest proves, if there be such a matter as salvation, that the few, who find it, must have found it according to the choice or adoption, revealed in the scripture and enforced from heaven.

But wherefore wert thou chosen and adopted, O my foul; while many, to all appearance better, or at least not possibly worse by nature, than thou art, have been neglected or left? What reasons canst thou

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perceive in thyself, why the Lord should set his love upon thee, and not upon thy neighbour or thy friend, who perhaps have not erred and strayed farther or fo far from him? Why was one blaspheming thief taken for an heir of falvation, and his fellow, not worse than himself, left to perish in his sins? Why was the harlot Mary Magdalene, who was possessed completely by the devil, accepted to grace; while many of the chafte and fober matrons of Ifrael found no regard? Why were the learned, the devout, the fcrupulous Pharifees fentenced to wrath; and the ignorant fishermen, the extorting publicans, the careless finners, reclaimed and faved?-Lord, I can give no reason for all this conduct of thine, but what thou thyself hast been pleased to give: Even so, Father; for so it seemed good in thy fight! All must have perished, but for thy mercy: it is of thy free grace, and according to thy fovereign will alone, that any are plucked as brands from the burning. They must have confumed with the rest, if thy power had not rescued them from the fire.

Keep me then, O my God, from nice inquisitions, or rather from presumptuous determinations, upon the motives and rules of thy conduct, which thou hast not revealed; but cause me meekly to submit to the conduct itself, which must be holy and good, because it is thine. O may I be thankful, with the generation of thy children, for finding the tokens of thy blessed

bleffed adoption upon me. May I cherish them in my heart. May they be confidered as my true riches and estate. May they lead my foul to humble and hearty adoration of thee, and to full refignation of all I am and have, to thy righteous and all-governing will. Let me wonder and admire, with tears of joy, and with the most glowing fensations of love, that thou shouldest condescend to save and to adopt me, a creature in myself altogether vile and impure, helples. and forlorn. It was thy doing, and thine alone; and it is marvellous in my eyes. But that thou shouldest defign for me, and affure me that thou haft defigned by thy holy word, not merely a deliverance from fin and from hell, but a crown of glory, a kingdom prepared, a royal priesthood, an everlasting throne, and all these as my own unalienable inheritance, incorruptible, undefiled, and unfading :----Lord, what can I more fay; or how shall I think of this without rapture and awe! Touch my heart as thou didft the heart of thy servant David, and cause me, like him, to fing with a melody beyond the reach of founds; Bleffed be thou, JEHOVAH, the ALEHIM of Ifrael, our Father, for ever and ever. Thine, O LORD, is the greatness, and the power, and the glory, and the victory, and the majesty: for all that is in the heaven and in the earth, is thine: thine is the kingdom, O LORD, and thou art exalted as HEAD above all. Both riches and honor come of thee, and thou reignest over all, and

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in thine hand is power and might, and in thine hand it is to make great, and to give strength unto all. Now, therefore, our God, we thank thee, and praise thy glorious name \*.

## HEIRS.

As the title adopted shews the free grace of God in taking his people out of the mass of mankind; this name heirs expresses the right of his people, in consequence of that grace, to all the blessings of salvation, which compose their one great inheritance.

This right is founded in the purchase of Christ, who is a person in Jehovah, and therefore able to pay down an infinite price for an endless glory to the Godhead; and who is also perfect man, and therefore the proper head of his redeemed, in and through whom they may receive what he wrought out and obtained for his own human nature, and for them in union with it. The price was his blood and righteousness; and thus the one is called the blood of God, because of the union of the two natures in one person; and the other is named, the righteousness of sections and himself, Jehovah their righteousness, be-

cause of its infinite perfection, and because of their eternal interest both in it and in him.

He bestows the inheritance upon them, who are given to him of the Father; and these he calls emphatically his own.

It comes therefore to them as a matter of rightful purchase by their Redeemer of the Father, and as an estate of gracious gift from the Redeemer, in conjunction with the will and influence of the Spirit and the Father. Thus, they are heirs of God both by adoption and purchase; and joint-heirs with Christ, as to his humanity, of all, which that humanity can possibly possess in glory. Their title is strong and sure; and all the attributes of Jehovah are engaged, by covenant among the divine Persons themselves, and by their oath upon the divine record, to make it good to the believers in Jesus, who are therefore significantly styled, THE HEIRS OF SALVATION.

The inheritance cannot be lost; and the heirs of the inheritance are equally certain. They receive it, not merely because God is merciful, but because he is just and cannot deny himself. They are in Christ, and under the covenant of his peace, by whom and by which alone all the divine attributes can harmonize in the salvation of a sinner: out of Christ and this covenant, Jehovah is a just God indeed; and, therefore, to every sinner, nothing but a consuming sire.

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In this present life, these heirs of falvation are new-born, or regenerated with a new nature, from the Holy Spirit. When this great work takes place, the old Adam, which is corrupt according to the deceitful lusts, begins to die in them; and they are renewed and quickened daily, with increase of life or growth in grace, for a more perfect confummation. They are here, as heirs in their minority, under tutelage and guardianship, until the time appointed to every one of them by the Father. They need difcipline; and they have it. The correction improves them; which shews the wisdom and love that sent it, and also demonstrates, that they are, not bastards, but fons. All this takes place within them, not to give them a title to heaven, nor yet to augment that title; but to demonstrate, that they have an interest in it, and that the title, which always rests in Christ, as its proper foundation, is extended with all its happy effects unto them. Without this particular extenfion, they might talk of a title, and might have a name to live, but they would be dead before God, and would have no real possession or right to any thing.

When they are of age, which with God is meafured not by years but by defignation and fitness, they are translated from their present mean condition into the full enjoyment of their estates. Death strips off the garments of corruption and bondage; and, immediately upon their entrance into glory, they are

clothed

clothed upon with life and immortality. We know not, and cannot know, what that dress, that inheritance, fully is: but if we could now by our present faculties know them, it is very certain, they must be much meaner than they are, and consequently less worthy of Christ's purchase and our enjoyment.

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Probably, the state of angels will be inferior to that of the redeemed. Of them it is never faid, that they are to be one in the Father and Son, and partakers of the glory of the Messiah. They are called ministring spirits, and represented as attendants upon the heirs of falvation. One, who not only lay upon, but faw deeply into, the bosom of his master, hath told us; Beloved, now are we the fons of God; and it doth not yet appear what we shall be: but we know, that when he shall appear, we shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is \*. It was well faid by a gracious man; "How little do the mourning attendants of believers think, what visions of God, what ravishing fights of Christ, the souls of their departed friends may have, while they are clofing their eyes with tears!"

Christian reader, I cannot tell thee the greatness of thine inheritance, for it is infinite; nor its worth, for it is inestimable; nor its blessedness, for it is unspeakable; nor its duration, for it is everlasting.

\* 1 John iii. 2.

But I can tell thee, upon the best authority, that it is fure to all the feed, and that, if thou art one of them, it is infallibly fure to thee. If thou art called by grace, if fin be thy hate and thy load, if thou live by faith, if thou walk with Christ, if thy hope and expectation be only in him, if earth be thy wilderness and thou art kept in due measure unspotted from the world, if heaven be thy home, and thy heart burn within thee at times to be there;—these are figns and tokens, which the devil puts not upon his children, nor the world endures; these are pledges and proofs, that thou art an heir of the kingdom, and that the kingdom itself shall be thine. Go on, bleffed foul, go on, and fight the good fight of faith, and hold on, through the arm which fustains thee, and hold out unto the end. Soon shalt thou hear those animating words, Well done, good and faithful fervant, enter thou into the joy of thy Lord!

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## BORN OF GOD, OR REGENERATE.

This title is given to the redeemed, in order to distinguish their present from their former state, and their persons from all other men, as born naturally of the offspring of Adam. It implies that great doctrine of regeneration, which is so offensive to the world, and the peculiar privilege of God's children in being redeemed from it.

The absolute necessity of experiencing this truth in order to salvation is most forcibly stated by our Lord in those memorable words: Verily, verily, I say unto thee (Nicodemus), Except a man be born again, or from above, he cannot see the kingdom of God; and again; Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God\*.

The people of God are naturally born as all other men, and, till they are new-born, have the same spirit which is in the men of the world, and live like them in darkness of life and error of mind. Who maketh them to differ, at length; from others? No other answer doth the scripture afford than this; They are born, not of blood, nor of the will of the

<sup>\*</sup> John iii. 3, 5.

flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God\*. They could not contribute to their own natural birth, though other human agents might and did; but, in this case of spiritual life, both their own will and the will of man, the will of all slesh, the constitution of nature itself and its life, signified by the blood, are wholly excluded from the primary cause, which is entirely referred to that divine Agent, who worketh all things after the counsel of his own will.

This is a fore grievance to the world, and to the wisdom and powers of fallen man, who cannot endure the exclusion of boasting: but it is God's word, and his inviolable truth, notwithstanding. It is revealed as doctrine; and it is confirmed by fact.

Art thou a master of Israel, and knowest not these things? This question to Nicodemus might be offered to thousands, who are learned like him; but can receive no answer from reason, darkened and doubtful reason, which guide, blind in these matters, is the only guide they know. Another instructor must unfold the mystery of that wisdom, which none of the princes or great men of this world knew or can know. Our Lord informs us, how any man attains this gracious information. I thank thee, O Father; Lord of heaven and earth [this marks his sovereignty] because thou hast hid these things from the wise and

<sup>\*</sup> John i. 13.

prudent, and hast revealed them unto babes. Even so, Father, for so it seemed good in thy sight. All things are delivered unto me of my Father; and no man knoweth the Son, but the Father: neither knoweth any man the Father, save the Son, and he to whomsoever the Son will reveal him\*.

Here we behold the cause of regeneration; and now we may contemplate the nature of it, and, finally, its effects.

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Art thou a master of Israel, and knowest not these things? The question returns, and is equally applicable to Nicodemus, and to all others, who have studied their bibles. "It is no new doctrine, which I declare unto you, though new to and ever unattainable by carnal reason. The principle of it is evident in the saith and grace of Abel: the operation is expressly delineated in the book and experience of Job."

God speaketh once, yea twice, yet man perceiveth it not. He is ever speaking by his word. He cometh at last in visions of the night, after the manner of the Old Testament dispensation, and openeth the ears of men, which before were stopped, and sealeth their instruction by the seal of his Spirit; that he may draw man from his work [nwy] his own purpose and designs, and hide pride from man. Thus he keepeth

<sup>\*</sup> Matt. xi. 25-27.

back his foul from the pit, and his life from the overpaffing fword, which, as in type the Egyptians, shall ere long destroy the unbelieving world. He is chastened also with pain upon his bed, and the multitude of his bones with strong pain. He hath no rest from the deep and thorough conviction of his fin. So that his life abhorreth bread, and his foul dainty meat; that which he formerly lived on, that which engroffed his whole delight and defire. His flesh is consumed away, that it cannot be seen, and his bones, that were not feen, flick out. The flesh, with all its wifdom and glory, is fubdued and put out of fight for hope and help; and all the strength of its unrighteousness, denoted by its bones, now manifeftly appears. Yea, his foul draweth near unto the grave, and his life to the destroyers. He is almost overwhelmed with despair, and seems ready to perish for his fins .- This is the first work of the divine Spirit, inducing the conviction of fin by his pointed application of the just and holy law. And the same is described, under the several images of helpless folitude, piercing hunger and thirst, miserable darkness and bondage, the shadow of death, horrible confinement and fickness, fearful tempests and agitations upon mighty waters, and other concomitant circumstances, in the cviith Pfalm.

When the foul is thus mercifully, though painfully, brought low in itself; then the Holy Spirit exhibits

exhibits the means of falvation. The circumcifing knife of the law, in the hands of the divine Agent, is spiritually the introduction to the new covenant of grace and peace through Jesus Christ. And now the Benoni becomes a Benjamin.

Then there is, or appears, with him, or over hims the ANGEL-INTERPRETER, the advocate, or paraclete, one among a thousand, one exalted above his brethren, to shew unto man his uprightness, or how God can be just, and yet the justifier of him, that believeth in Jesus. And he [the Angel-interpreter] is gracious unto him, and saith, Deliver him from going down to the pit, I have found a ransom [ [ ] ] a propitiation.—This is the second branch of the Spirit's office thus to take of the things of Jesus, and shew, or ensorce, them to the soul.

The great refult is the renewal of the believer. His flesh (like Naaman's at his baptism in Jordan, which also preached this great truth) shall be fresher than a child's; he shall receive the kingdom of God as a child, or new-born babe: he shall be returned to the days of his youth, or be more holy in God's sight than before the fall. He shall pray unto God, and he will be favourable unto him, and he shall see his face with joy; for he will render unto man his righteousfness; i. e. either pronounce him righteous, or transfer his righteousness to him. He looketh upon men, and (if any) say, I have sinned, and perverted that which

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which was right, and it profited me not; He will deliver his foul from going into the pit, and his life shall fee the light; or in the light [in Christ, who is the light of life] his life shall be seen. Lo, all these things God worketh who word, in three gradations, or concussions, with man, to bring back his foul from the pit, to be enlightened with the light of the living.

\* Job xxxiii. 14-30. The fymbols, in Lev. ix. preach the same truth in another form. It would exceed the compass of a note to go through the whole chapter; but the ferious reader will probably not be displeased with a few hints on its spiritual sense and meaning. V. 1. On the eighth day, so called because a day of grace and acceptance, in which believers, through the facrifice of Christ for fin, enter into a new state or condition with God; the people were to present themselves before the Lord. V. 9. And they were to come through faith in the strength of Christ to fave, and to lay no foundation for acceptance but in his blood poured forth. V. 10, 11. Putting off also the old man, with his affections and lufts: V. 14. And obtaining the washing of regeneration to the praise of God's glory. V. When believers are thus atoned for, and renewed, and justified; they ascribe all authority and power over them to Jehovah; v. 19. and to him alone, wholly difclaiming themselves: v. 20. And this they do sincerely and from their very breafts: v. 21. testifying it openly and on every fide before the world. V. 22. And then they feel the blefing of their great High-Priest upon their fouls; which ends, v. 23. in the vision and enjoyment of the divine glory, and, v. 24. in their final acceptance by Jehovah .- This is a flight view of the gospel, as contained in Exodus and Leviticus, which books, to the gracious mind duly instructed in the mysteries of the kingdom and in the holy tongue which reveals them, speak none other things than the evangelists in their gospels.

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This is God's work of regeneration; and this is a very antient description of its mode, its effects, and its experience. The New Testament is sull of this important truth, as well as the old, in all the distinctions between sless and spirit, the new man and the old, the outward and the inner man, the sheep and the goats, the darkness and the light, life and death, nature and grace, and, in a word, between almost every thing which concerns the life of redemption in the soul of man, and that which is opposite to it. Without this true peravoia, or change of mind, no sinner born of Adam, can either obtain salvation, or can be capable of enjoying it.

By this description in Job, by other testimonies in the word of God, and by the concurrent experience of the redeemed, this great business, the greatest which the soul can know, is not begun or carried on, by carnal reasoning or moral suasion, but by a divine power, inserting a new life descending from Christ, and increased and supported by communion with him. Thus the Apostle: I live, yet not I, but Christ liveth in me: and the life which I now live in the sless, I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me. Nor is this of private interpretation, or a circumstance peculiar to the apostle alone; but the common privilege and experience of all who, like him, are born of God. It is the portion of the whole generation of God's children, who,

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like other children, have one family-likeness and common life, and who derive from him, their Father in Christ, that life and likeness, by which they refemble him and each other. They are the fons of God, because they are born again of him, who is God, and who is not ashamed, great and glorious as he is, to call and to own them for his children. This general affembly of the first born [i. e. God's own born] will be an innumerable family when collected together, according to that remarkable prophecy concerning Christ: Thy people shall be willing for free-willingness itself] in the day of thy power, in, or with, the beauties of holiness: From the womb of the morning, thou hast the dew of thy youth; or, as Bishop Lowth has rendered it, more than the dew from the womb of the morning is the dew of thy progeny \*.

<sup>\*</sup> Pf. cx. 3. "It was the opinion of the antient Jews, that the refurrection would be effected by means of a certain dew, of a plastic power, from heaven, as it is written in the Jerusalem Talmud and Jelcudi." Manasse Ben Israel in Humphreys's Dist. upon Athenag. p. 15. Possibly the notion is founded upon Isaah xxvi. 19. Thy dead men shall live, together with my dead body shall they arise: awake and sing, ye that dwell in the dust; for thy dew is as the dew of herbs, and the earth shall cast out the dead. See Hos. xiv. 6. and Pocock in Port. Mos. p. 117.—The spiritual sense of the image, in the above passage of the Psalm, is very beautiful, and testifies, that as the dew is to herbs, so is Christ to his people, and that more than the dew from the womb of the morning is the number of his chosen. In reality,

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The effects of this regeneration are produced by the Holy Spirit, as well as regeneration itself. He worketh both to will and to do of his good pleasure. The cause, the action, and the effect, are all of him. As that, which is born of the flesh, is flesh, gross, sensual, and unclean; so that, which is born of this Spirit, is spirit, refined, pure, and heavenly. The one is entirely sinful, and born in sin: the other is strictly holy, being born, or new-created, in righteousness, and true holiness, of him, who is absolutely perfect and holy. They live together in one individual man here below; but are absolutely contrary to each other. Rom. vii.

Each of these natures hath also its distinct and peculiar understanding. The mind of the sless what is usually called rational, but which the scripture terms sensual, because it is occupied, and can only be occupied to purpose, in sensual material things. Hence it is not only corrupt through the sall, but dark and doubtful, even upon the substances

the only true phoenix, fo much talked of by the antients, is found verified in every real Christian: out of the death of sin in him rises up the life of right-ousness; and from the death of the body springs the resurrection to life eternal.

As to the sleep of the soul, it is an opinion very contrary to the scripture, which represents men as going out of or putting off the body; but this would be absurd, if the soul lay down and slept in it; and the separation of body and soul, in that case, would also be impossible.

obvious

obvious to the fenses, and much more so upon affairs intellectual or divine. The mind of the fpirit, as renewed of God and actuated by him, is spiritual, and is now the only faculty by which spiritual things can be truly known or discerned. These things, though proceeding from the wisdom of God himself, are foolishness to the carnal mind of the natural man, because he cannot apprehend them; just as a conversation in foreign language, or some mathematical problems, would appear but as gibberish or imposfibilities to an unlettered clown. There must be a faculty to receive the object; or the object is inapplicable and useless. This faculty is termed the new man, because it is not inherent, but brought into our nature by regeneration: it is the holy principle, which the Holy Spirit produces, and by which it acts upon the foul. It is the nexus or bond, by which the spirit of a man, through the agency of the Holy Spirit, is brought into union with Christ, and through Christ with the Father \*.

<sup>\*</sup> The Spirit of God is indeed every where, but yet, in a certain fense, not in all men, such as the fensual or reprobates, nor in all spirits, such as the fallen angels. They have, it is true, a life from God, and are supported by him as creatures, or they must cease to be: but he is not that life to them, which he is to saints and pure spirits, and which can and doth subsist either with or without the life natural. The air of the world is the medium or instrument of life to all creatures upon it, and is also the material emblem of the invisible Spirit;

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In this mortal state, clogged and circumvented as the children of God are with fenfuality and fin, they can discern but little, compared with what they shall know hereafter, of the things of God: and the men of the world know nothing truly of them at all. In that future state, when every film will be removed from the mental eye, and every other obstruction done away; the apprehension, proportionate in some degree to the new and innumerable objects which may present themselves, shall be inconceivably sharpened and enlarged. Perhaps, there may not only be ftrengthening of the spiritual faculties which we already have, but an addition of others, concerning the nature of which we cannot now have the least conception or idea. As an oyster (for an instance or fimilitude taken from the natural world) cannot, with its one faculty of mere feeling, comprehend the fenses of hearing and fight which men enjoy, and much lefs the fublime faculties of the human mind; so it is not impossible, but that the sons of God, upon their introduction to their perfect state, shall have

Spirit; but this air, though always filling both live and dead animals and vegetables, carries on no act of life in a dead plant or a dead body. So the Holy Spirit is, in one respect, within the deadest sinner, knowing and searching the thoughts and intents of his corrupt heart; but it will easily be allowed, that, as he cannot mix with the corruption he finds there, so it is an aweful fact, that his presence in that way imparts neither spiritual life nor falvation.

powers

powers to conceive, as well as objects to be conceived, of a nature, subtlety, variety, and employment, which at present almost infinitely transcend their utmost stretch of thought and imagination. Of this, however, we are very sure, because God himself hath said it; that eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love him.

And is this thine expectation and thine end, 0 thou favored child of God? Hath God done such great things for thee; and hath he prepared more than thou canst either ask or think? Then why is the king's son lean from day to day? Ought he not to hope and conclude, with the sweet singer of Israel; Why art thou cast down, O my soul; and why art thou disquieted within me? Hope thou in God, for I shall yet praise him, who is the health of my countenance and my God.

To the real believer every day's mercies bring with them fresh motives and arguments for gratitude and praise. He lives by faith; and the faith by which he lives, or which, as to its principle, is life itself from Christ, is the first great mercy which he can spiritually experience, and the pledge and introduction to all the rest. Without faith he cannot truly understand, or properly use any one of them; and therefore, for this cause as well as others, without faith it is impossible to please God. If thou hast

this faith in thine heart, O reader, thou art a Christian, and glive from the dead. If thou art a Christian, thou art in Christ, and entitled to all that he hath purchased and provided. Thou art, in that case, united to him, and dear to his heart. Whatever afflicts thee, he feels it in his love and over-rules it by his wisdom. Thou are not too low for his highest and most endearing thoughts. If a sting, almost invifible, wound the meanest member of thy body; thy whole frame is awakened and concerned; and thine eye, thine hand, thy mind, are directed to minister relief. Infinitely more so is thy Head, the Lord of thy light and life, alive to thy forrows and to all thy concerns. Their causes and tendencies may escape thy notice; but they escape not his. He hath omniscience to superintend, and omnipotence to support, the poorest and the feeblest member of his mystic body. He noticed thee, and marked thee for his own; or thou never couldest have lifted up an eye of faith and confidence towards him. For whom he hath thus called, will he not care? will he bestow his life on thee for no end? can he forget what he hath fuffered, and for whom he hath died? if he hath called thee by his grace, and thou feekest him, canst thou presume to imagine, that all this was a matter of chance, or rather that he did not first seek thee? if he sought thee, and bleffed thee with the distinction of his mercy; is it possible, that this can go for nothing, or come to

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### CHILDREN OF GOD.

In these days of rebuke and blasphemy, when all forts of falfe opinions are brifkly circulated, and, through the diffoluteness of the times, have a rapid adoption from their fuitableness to corrupt nature; I have often thought, that, befides the historical view I have elsewhere drawn up \* of the herefies, which have been raised upon the doctrine of the divine persons in the Godhead, there are Two grand points of Christian doctrine, to which it might be useful to give a comparison with the differences, held by a variety of persons, from them. They seem to be criteria, or touchftones, of principles, and involve conclusions of the greatest importance to the purity and happiness of the Christian life. The one is the FALL and DEPRAVITY OF NATURE; and the other the BEING and OPERATION of that GRACE, by which the foul is restored to God. Though it may lengthen this particular chapter beyond the ufual extent of most others, I trust it will not be wholly unacceptable, if I treat the weighty subject of it with some difference of method. This difference will be chiefly historical; for I mean to relate fomething of the principal persons, who have propagated opinions upon the great doctrines above

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<sup>\*</sup> Horæ Solit. Vol. I. p. 439. and Vol. II. p. 463.

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mentioned, and then to compare those opinions particularly with the doctrines themselves, as held by the greatest lights of the reformation.

When I would point out one of the first and greatest impugners of the doctrines of grace, the reader's mind will probably anticipate the name of Pelagius. His true name was Margan, a British monk, who began to appear about the year 405. There was no outward blemish in his life and conversation; but he was esteemed, on the contrary, a man of remarkable piety and exemplary manners. His learning too was confessedly eminent: and his natural eloquence and understanding were such, as created general admiration. He had also a disciple and co-adjutor, named Celestius, almost equally considered for talents with himself, but much his superior in birth, being descended from an illustrious family in Scotland or Ireland.

These began to publish their opinions in Italy, is not in Rome, and drew away many disciples after them. When Rome was taken by Alaric the Goth in 410, they retired for about two years to Sicily, and then to Africa, infecting the whole country with their tenets, and especially the city of Carthage. But here first they received a public check. A council was called in 412, wherein the Bishop of Carthage presided, which condemned their principal error, in denying original sin, or rather the transmission of it from Adam to his posterity. Pelagius, who had previously departed

parted to Palestine, escaped for a time the just censure, which the council thought fit to pass upon his disciple Celestius.

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In Palestine, by great address and extraordinary appearances of fanctity, Peligius found powerful advocates and numerous admirers. He even procured, by artful management, the decision of a council of fourteen Palestine bishops in his favor. Thisdecision, as the matter became more understood, produced counter-decisions of other councils and churches against him and his friend. People, in short, of the greatest eminence and stations were deceived and undeceived, with regard to these two persons; and the whole Christian world, especially the western part of it, was thrown into parties and confusions. Their doctrines were at length most solemnly condemned by feveral fucceeding Bishops of Rome, particularly by a famous decretal of Celestine the first, and by feveral councils \*. Let me only add here, for the fake of some of my readers, that the Church of Rome was not then, as afterwards, an impugner, but

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<sup>\*.</sup> CAVE Hift. Liter. The second council of Orange in particular published 25 canons upon grace and freewill against Pelagianism. Some of them are so striking and excellent, that, were there room, I could find a pleasure in translating them; as they shew the sentiments of the church in the year 529. Sum. Conc. per B. Carranzam. Fol. 168. Paris, 1552.

a maintainer, with the other churches of that age, of those principles, which are properly enough called the doctrines of grace.

Austin, Jerom, Marius Mercator, and other great men in the church, animadverted upon the growing herefy with all their abilities, confuted its tenets, and exposed their pernicious tendency. It was (as Ferom called it) the pestilence of of the church, which hath spread itself through every country of Christendom, and rankles in many different fects, to the prefent day. The Arian and other herefies, which affiicted the church at the fame time, fwell the volumes of ecclefiaftical history, and must fill every pious mind with concern, that fuch multitudes of perfons, many of whom were eminent for all that is valuable among men, should be either induced or obliged to treat religion, like philosophers their questions in the schools, as a fubject only to be debated on. It was a true expreffion of Sir Henry Watton's, though a coarse one, Pruritus disputandi, scabies ecclesia, " the itch of disputing is the scab of the church."

The SEMI-PELAGIANS (or as they were foon after called Maffilienses, from the people of Marseilles in France, to whom Cassian the monk carried this doctrine, about A. D. 430.) were formed principally under Julian Bishop of Eclana. His opinions were not radically different from those of his confederates. Pelagius and Celestius. Both himself and his many disciples

disciples agreed in the main, that grace was only an extraordinary gift or advantage of nature, by which, as by a superior understanding, the mind might work and merit consideration and reward even from God himself. They, as well as succeeding heretics upon the same subject, when sifted to the bottom, were discovered to confound grace and nature, and to refer to one what is the sole operation of the other.

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Concurring in too many things with these here-starchs, though possessing some advantages greatly above them, after many ages arose the samous Arminus; a man of great erudition, of great understanding, and confessedly of great apparent piety \*. The doctrines only, which he disseminated, drew into question among his contemporaries the truth and reality of his Christian profession. He is said to have been perverted by some Socinians of Poland and Saxony, who had

\*With equal truth and pleasure, I can say, in the language of the learned Dr John Edwards, that "I desire to entertain savorable thoughts of those I contest with, and to remember that holy men do sometimes build hay and stubble on the foundation. I charitably believe that there are many good men of the Arminian persuasion; though it is their unhappiness to be led away with the error of the age." Pref. to Ver. Redux. But I believe too, that their experience is superior to their principles; for when they are with God, they ask like all God's children, in the deepest sense of their own depravity and wants; but, when among men, they talk with almost the same considence of their own powers, as the people of the world.

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brought into Holland, Arminius's country, their heterodox principles and writings, which last were publicly burnt by order in 1598. But the seeds escaped, and grew up into evil trees with evil fruit.——I need not attempt this history, if I had room: it is in almost every hand. Let it suffice to add, that the opinions of Arminius and his adherents were solemnly condemned by the council or synod of Dort, in which was collected perhaps an assemblage of men, who, for their learning, their piety, for all natural and gracious attainments and advantages, are not to be ranked after any general council which ever appeared in the world.

Arminius began this defection from the principles of the reformed religion; yet it is but justice to fay, upon a careful perufal of his works, that he was not nearly so rank in heresy, nor followed Pelagius and Socinus half so close, as many have done who have followed him. Episcopius, (a man of the first parts, who chiefly wrote the Acta Synodalia in opposition to the fynod of Dort) Curcellaus, and, after thefe, Limborch, Le Clerc, and many others, widened the breach from the original doctrines of the reformation, and at last degenerated into a sect, which (to use Mr. Bayle's expression) is become " the common fink of all the Socinians in Europe." It must be allowed, that, as is natural in all errors, there are great gradations among the Arminians; fome verging towards

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words Pelagianism, with the celebrated Dr. Whitby\*, in feveral points; and some drawing nearer to the truth, and deserving to be distinguished from the others. These last have therefore been named, in order to prevent the appearance of abuse and confusion,

SEMI-ARMINIANS. It would feem invidious, and besides it is unnecessary, to mention names; because every body knows, and scarce any body attempts to difguife it, that a very great part of our clergy in the establishment, and very many of those out of it, have adopted principles, not at all agreeing with those of the reformation, or with the articles enjoined by public authority. Of those who have departed from the pure Calvinistic doctrine (or, to say better, from the pure and primitive truth) fome are fo far detached, as to render the difference obvious to every eye, and others approximate fo nearly, as to render it difficult precisely to draw the line. Yet a line there is; and every christian should endeavour to discover it; because they, that are not in the truth, are not of it, and because it is not a matter of indifference in the essentials of religion (whatever men of loofe or latitudinarian

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princi-

<sup>\*</sup> Abp. Tillotson goes farther than simple Pelagianism; for he says, that men have not only power to recover themselves, and (spiritually) to be carvers of their owns fortune;" but "have it also very much in their power to be the sovereign restorers of piety and virtue to a degenerate age;" nay, surther, that "they could certainly prevail, either to make men good or to restrain them from being so bad." Vol. ii. Serm. 5 p. 147, &c.

principles may think or fay under the specious pretext of moderation) whether men enjoy the truth or not. It was the advice of the wise, "Buy the truth, and sell it not:" it must not be lost, or parted with, or pared away, for ungracious accommodations, at any rate. Every particle is precious, because it originates from God. In questions of real indifference indeed, or in matters merely circumstantial, it is right to "think and let think;" but, in momentous and radical points, which affect the honor of God, the vitals of Christianity, the edification or salvation of souls; indifference or unconcern is a vice and a crime, founded in Laodicean lukewarmness at best, but often in a deplorable absence of the power of godliness.

With the above fects another should be noticed, which in every age of the church has been more or less rife, and is but too abundant in the present day: I mean that of the Antinomians. The first Protestant or reformed divine, who was entitled to this name, was fohn Islebius Agricola, a man of learning and eminence, an intimate friend of Luther, and a great assistant in the reformation. He himself was soon reclaimed by Luther, and, under the full conviction of his error, published a retractation. Happy for many would it have been, who have since imbibed his opinions, if they had followed him in this instance of his practice. There have been many gradations of these down to the most atrocious and libertine ranters;

but all have been accused, and many of them at least with too sufficient reason, of turning the grace of God into licenticusness, and of perverting Christian liberty to looseness of life, or to the vile unbridled liberty of the slesh.

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Without meaning to offend any one whom truth may not offend, I have thought it might not be unwelcome to fome readers at least, if I should attempt to draw into parallel the general opinions, as nearly as possible, in very few words, of the above mentioned fects, or forts of persons, upon the Two leading points I first proposed, namely, the FALL and DEPRAVITY of nature, and the GRACE of God. As I would not wilfully misrepresent any thing, I will endeavor to state their respective principles as clearly and faithfully as I can, leaving it to the candid and intelligent reader to correct me, if I am in the least instance mistaken, and only reminding him of the difficulty of drawing the opinions even of persons of the same denomination into propositions, that may comprize or satisfy them all. With respect to the doctrine, which God's word and Spirit teaches his people, I have less difficulty: they will confirm it, as others cannot, by their own experience. Such a fynopsis, or close and comparative view of the matter, may help to point out the frait line of truth from the deviations of error. I mean this for edification, not for disputation; for the exhibition of found doctrine, not for the promotion of discord; for the glory of God, and for the help of Christian men.

G 6

I. A

# I. A Summary of Opinions upon the Fall and Depravity of Nature.

fall of man and confe- born in the perfect will and ftrength towards deed fell, and depraved not only to lofe the right ule of ables him from work- ation; that both by the use of which capacity demption needful; but and opposition towards God; ing out such a righte- he and they would he may render himself fit for that there still remains a that notwithstanding there yet is in every man's own or natural power, digno, or of merit and defert: things, an innate capa- troduction of light and ftrength will and power to ex- both to avoid in a word, that the potency city to receive the gofpel by grace, it obtains a reflored use they mean only the na- the commands of ing only the exertion of a na- the one hand, or to refift tionally to embrace the truth of opinions; but no original fin; he lost not all his powers, but venant of works with the fo depraved, stunned, or loaded, ousnels, as may justify have died, had grace ex congruo, or meet part of the divine image, remains a natural capacity or affirm, however, for and that man hath by the use of this grace he ing God's commands to upon the removal of the load or the most part, that it now a vis natura, may obtain salvation ex con- believe and do spiritual stupesaction of sin, and the inman nature, which dif | parent at his cre- feeking, and knocking aright, fin, so as to make re- fin, to contract in them enmity him before God. They there been no fin; to receive it; and that then a natural power of obey- ability inherent in the foul, that, ercife faith (by which fin and to fulfil of faith is in a man's felf, be- and offers of falvation on of its moral powers, fo as rathey generally own the that children are that he still hath a natural first man; that man inquent depravity of hu- tion of the first good, a capacity of asking, himself and posterity by That there is 2. Pelagians. tural affent of the mind | God. Thefe are various in I. Antinomars.

their

without any inherent alteration, or renovation, or adhibition of new and fpiritual life, or any divine help fupernaturally cominu-

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election doth not arife from ther on the other. That though man fell, yet will, but from the forefight only of the right use of free his own eternal counsel and 3. Semi-Pelagians. will in the creatures.

That there was no co-A. Arminians.

That man by the fall became in the faculties of his foul, as tural faculty; and that God's and reject them altoge- the gospel, to give faith or credit because of their moral evidence and certainty, and to proceed to final falvation, through the fame its moral powers, but, through to the promifes, to truft in them grace and means continuing for c. Semi-Arminians.

that purpose to the end,

### 6. Orthodox.

That Adam was created under a covenant of works, by obedience to which he would have been happy, but by disobedience became miserable, and also ruined and corrupted all his faculties, by bringing present spiritual death (or separation from the life of God) upon his foul, fubjecting to natural death his body, and exposing both to death everlasting; that being, not metaphorically only, but truly and fpiritually dead to God, he hath no ability whatever spiritually and favingly to fee, know, love or receive the things of God, before he is quickened by a new birth; that, being totally averse and of contrary materials to goodness through corruption, he must be changed, renewed, or regenerated in the spirit of his mind, receiving in fuch change the adhibition of spiritual and divine faculties, called the unction from the Holy One or the divine nature, before he can be one with God, or be built up as a part of his temple; that this entire corruption and aversation of Adam from God was naturally transmitted to all his posterity, who, in him, both finned and fell, and who, with him, are naturally, morally, and spiritually, capable of nothing but fin, being only the " children of wrath," and " deferving only God's wrath and damnation;" that the leopard might fooner change his fpots, a clean thing be brought out of an unclean, or any contrary be produced from another, than they, who thus " of their own nature are inclined to nothing but evil," can exert a good will, power, or affection towards God, or by any principle in themselves, or from any other creature, reach the true knowledge and enjoyment of heavenly things.

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II. A

## A Summary of Opinions upon GRACE.

That grace means only the tree favor of God, That na- That the grace That grace lift- Those of them, who come nearest in providing Christ to pay man's debt of sin and ture, being of God is necessary cient is given to all to truth, say, That the doctrines of being reported to the ear, he has fufficient power, condition, all man cannot do good efficiency depends whole of the falvation of the elect deif his will be so inclined, left in his nature to the use of works; but that he upon themselves; pends upon Cod; that, according to to obey the law in his itead; that, on thefe truths in its priftine ly, as without it men, but that its grace are to be admitted, and that the be no more confcience of fin under the most from nature because grace is the ticular and special and determining the natural will by liberty from legal bondage; that thus fin can do universal, or fruit of grace; that faculties, by the posed agency of the Holy Spirit in fcriptures, which mention this, are either to be and that this falvation; and that man, a man may, enthufialtic and fanatical; and, in a yield faith, or affent, to them, and thereby right - grace must must come to God that it comes by his own election, God bestows both of God, not only as a covenant of works, but to render the without any grace and not by commu- enforcing their in refinous upon the enormous transgressions, these being all swal- more easy; reward of previous gift of faith, with these, but without imparting new a believer no harm, because it is all pardoned, God would grace, when given, Spirit of God; and changing the heart, in regenerating nor acts of goodness any service, because he is be partial is imparted to the that grace, not be the mind, in new creating to spiritual pleteness of Christ's obedience; and that all the lit to another; work out and merit action of God upon above the corrupt life of nature, is referred to the power and life of the written grace works electing grace is an by the natural word, that the natural or rational faword, or are to be understood figuratively, as only in the impious doctrine, power of the will, culties of the foul, by the Spirit's rethe change of a man's state only in point of ac- improvement tending to establish receive grace, or, moval of moral impediments, and by new life beflowed with new powers, or what is tural facul- of Fate or Necef- reaft, frustrate, and impression, are restored to that abiliof Christ's righteousness; that this benefit, so perate with him of his own mination, or moral ble light to the understanding by his lowed up in Christ, and the foul brought into a that grace is faith, not faith the new and spiritual and divine faculties; that the supjustified without them; that, confequently, the and unjust to rational and natural ing the omnipotent, life, (excepting in byperbole or figure) inward operation of the Spirit is as well unne-grant it to faculties, in order but only the physi- and in maintaining that life by a real cessary, as derogatory to the freedom and com- lose and deny to enable them to cal, or co-operating, union with Christ, both against and ceptance, and not virtually or inherently as a of man's nat the Roical notion by the fame power, That grace means only the tree favor of God, That na- That the grace will and ftrengch. also as a rule of life; that there is therefore to work due for that purpose fully obtains pardon of in, and the imputation be to co-oreceived, delivers him absolutely from the law it, it order ufually fignified by imparted grace, fanctified ties. experience, the internal witness of the Holy

c. Semi-Arminians. 4. Armimians.

fuation, of the mind, Spirit, proposing rational motives and nication of the par- | mind, either by or without the word, his own moral influence, fuafion and hilt, believing ir way of rational illu- futheient, efficient, and even invinciby, which acts faith, performs obetually to make it no dience, pleafes God, and, through Christ, obtains glory. reject it, fo as even - 1

### 6. Orthodox.

That grace is both free mercy in itself, and an inward communication from God to his chosen in Christ; that the will and powers of man before conversion rather result than promote it; that, therefore, in the FIRST act of grace in conversion, man being spiritually dead to God is wholly impotent and passive under the fole activity of the Divine Spirit, who takes away not only the strength of refisting, but the will to relift; that this gracious Agent imparts a new and divine nature, with its own proper and peculiar faculties, or, in other words, by the action of his grace, constitutes a new creation with a new-life, a new birth to a new and spiritual world, and an holy refurrection of the foul from the death of fin in this evil world; that, in confequence of this, the person hath an heart of flesh for an heart of stone, so called because naturally incapable by fin of all gracious impressions; that the Holy Spirit bestows not only light, but fight, to the understanding, and then not merely appeals by moral evidence of reason, but infuses a supernatural act and conviction of faith, which, though not against found reason, is of far greater force, and in this way applies what is emphatically called the demonstration of the Spirit and of power; that, the Holy Spirit alone, operating upon the foul, as the foul doth upon the body, UNITES it to Christ for all things, and THEN, but not till then,

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experience, the internal witness of the Holy Spirit, and the like.

tually to make it no dience, pleafes God, grace at all.

by a fweet and divine compulsion, draws and enables the natural faculties, in the degree appointed, both to will and to do, of his good pleasure, for all life. and holiness; that, in this way, and by the inftrumentality of the word, the believer is taught of God in all the truth of falvation, having also the very " thoughts of his heart cleanfed by the inspiration of the Holy Spirit;" that being truly inspired, by having Christ dwelling in his heart, and by having the Spirit of Christ, without which he could be none of his, he is and must be, though but a wayfaring man, infallibly taught, both because the teacher is TRUTH itself, and because it is not possible for the elect to be finally or effentially deceived; that thus the Christian is not a doubting reasoner, grounding himself upon the fallacious deductions of a depraved understanding, but a gracious and firm believer, kept by the power of God through faith unto falvation, of which he receives the earnest by the work of the Spirit within him, and of which he gives the proof by works of righteoufness from him.

The last consession is not a mere human scheme or system, but is founded upon the divine oracles. It is also most certainly agreeable to the public confessions \* of the reformed churches, to the sentiments

<sup>\*</sup> See the valuable Syntagma Confessionum Fidei, published at Geneva, 1612. See also the testimony of Bradford and other reformers in Fox's Acts. p. 1470. Wirs.

of the most pious and learned divines both English and foreign who follow those confessions, and is indeed pure and unsophisticated Calvinism, or rather (what it ought to be called) true and vital Christianity; as might be proved by a multitude of testimonies, if it were necessary.

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From the premises it follows; that, if it be said, men can act for God by their own natural powers without his grace, it is Pelagianism: -Or, that grace only is needful to affift those natural powers in order to work, after men have believed, and asked, and fought for it; this is Semi-Pelagianism: - Or, that all men have common or sufficient grace to aid the natural powers in order to acquire more grace, or can refift grace in its intentions and operations; this is Arminianism: -Or, that the natural powers are only illuminated and strengthened by the grace of God, though invincibly fo, in order to faith and holinefs, without any infusion of a new and divine nature, with its own new and peculiar faculties; this is Semi-Arminianism \*: -Or, finally, that the natural or any other faculties of men, either in or towards the act of conversion or regeneration, or new birth by the divine Spirit, have in the first instance no ability at all,

Diff. Epift. ad Huber. &c. ad loc. Abp. Leighton, River, Owen, Du Moulin, &c.

<sup>\*</sup> This opinion was cenfured by the Synod at Rotterdam in April, 1686.

but are purely passive in the hands of God, as the clay in the hands of the potter, the Spirit blowing where it listeth, and men hearing only the found thereof, but incapable of bringing it in, or driving it away; and that, in consequence, of this birth, a new and divine life is insused with its own new and gracious faculties, which life then operates upon all the natural faculties, so that even these are enabled to yield an obedience, which before they were both incapable of and contrary to; this is the true and unsophisticated doctrine of the Bible, of late years called Calvinism.

It is nothing to the present purpose to say, that our natural powers are to be brought under the means of grace, and are to be exercised as much as possible in all ordinances; for this is both agreed to and insisted upon by all true Calvinists: but the elenchus, or clinch, of the whole matter is their potency in the affair of conversion, upon which all true Calvinists are agreed, that they have in se no potency at all, but that the whole workmanship is of God, as much as the original creation of the world was; and that therefore it is called xappa allows, a NEW creation.

Nor is it to the purpose to urge, that this principle is abused by hypocrites and false professors; for there is not one doctrine of the gospel, which has not been abused, and perhaps more grossly abused than this either has been or can be. The greatest mercies are the most capable of the vilest abuses,

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but NOT BY THE CHILDREN OF GOD. The devil and his agents first ruined the world of nature; and all their malice and subtlety are ever upon the watch to mar and disturb, though they cannot destroy, the world of grace. But, the soundation of the Lord standeth sure, having this seal; The Lord knoweth them that are his; and, Let every one, that nameth the name of Christ, depart from iniquity.

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This is the way, in which the children of God will always defire to manifest their regeneration. An heavenly birth must have heavenly actions and an heavenly mind. It is that likeness to God, which the believer both hath and loves. The experimental Christian, therefore, cannot talk of his own natural powers, which are infirm and difcordant, but of the goodness of God and the power of God manifested in him and to him. All other men are of the earth earthy; and the tendency of their hearts and lives, when duly examined, is earthy altogether. Whatsoever is born of the flesh is flesh. and cannot possibly rife above its own principle or cause. The works of the flesh must therefore necessarily be produced either from the carnal hand or carnal mind: and these can produce no other. A corrupt tree cannot bring forth good fruit; for of thorns men do not gather figs, nor of a bramble-bush gather they grapes. The spiritual birth constitutes. the effential difference between those, who are made

by

by it the children of God, and those, who are only a naturally engendered of the offspring of Adam." And the effect and fruits of this birth prove the difference to the believer's own conscience in the sight of God, and generally in the fight of the world.

### CIRCUMCISED.

This appellation, in the letter, belonged to God's people under the law, as persons entered into his covenant, and bearing the sign of it in their sless; but, in the spiritual and final intention, the title is equally applicable to the redeemed under the Christian dispensation. For, however, their times and economies may vary, their right or grace of salvation is one and the same.

The facrament of circumcision was first appointed to Abraham by Fehovah himself, when he made known unto him his covenant, and shewed that he was the Alehim, the persons in covenant, both to him and his seed after him; that is, to all those who are partakers and followers of the same faith with him, and to whom, for that reason, he is spiritually the Father, or fore-runner \*.

<sup>\*</sup> Rom. iv. 11, &c.

The fign imported, the cutting away the filth of the flesh, the old man of fin, the superfluity of naughtiness, and that the persons, on whom it truly was made, were separated, in spirit, from the world, the flesh, and the devil, and were now become ftrangers and pilgrims upon earth, feeking a better country and a heavenly. It also fignified, that, as they had, by this act and the faith of it, renounced their former flate and condition of nature, they were become partakers of another calling, and devoted to another fervice, even God's; and that, as God in mercy had delivered them from their former wretchedness, and brought them into the promise and prospect of an everlasting inheritance, according to an everlafting covenant established between the persons in Jehovah, who therefore called themselves the Alehim, the covenanters, witnesses, &c. they, as believers in that covenant and promife, admitted the fign of it upon them, by which they might be known as fuch both to other believers, who had undergone the fame rite, and to the world, who despised it. In token of this, they received a name for life and distinction, (and among the Jews a fignificant name) if before they had none, as children had not; or, if they had one before, as Abraham had, then a new name, which testified their new life and calling by the covenant of God. Thus Abraham was chosen, and brought forth from the idolatrous world,

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world, and entered into the covenant of God \*: and, in the same way or spirit, all believers are induced to sollow him as their Father, and are named or known of God, as he was.

This facramental fign was a painful testimony (as I have elsewhere observed) of faith, and especially to adults; and therefore was a considerable testimony of the sincerity of those, who submitted to it, or who broug t their children under the operation †. The thing signified is abundantly more so. The circumcision of the Spirit, in cutting off a man from himself, or in putting off the old man, the renunciation of self and its lusts, the conquest of the world, the resistance

\* Neh. ix. 1. Rev. ii. 7. iii. 12.

+ To this purpose is the remark of that great physician and learned Rabbi, MA MONIDES: Circumcifio Superfluum appetitum diminuit : quod a tem virtatem intenfram membri illius voluptatemque detilitat, id extra omnem dulitationem eft. Nam cum membrum diud statim in pfa nativitate sanguinem suum effundit, te umentumque amittit, fine omni aubio exinde debilitatur. Hinc dixerunt fapientes nostri: mulierem cum viro incircumciso matrimonio junctam difficulter ab iff toffe abstrabi. - Circumcifi babent unum quoddam fignum, quod illos conjungat, & ne quis alius, qui non est ex illis, dicere post, se ex illis esse. Nam solet quandoque komo id, vel propter fuum commodum, vel in altorum contumeliam & detrimentum, facere: fed bæc actio, circumcisionis nempe, ita comparata est, ut nemo vel sibi, vel liberis surs, nist propter fidem & religionem, eam sit facturus. Nam non est levis aliqua cruris la fio, vel trackii adufiio, sed res durissima et difficillima. More Nev. p. iii. c. 49.

of the devil, with all the adverse and hostile circumflances connected with these, are not flight and easy affairs; but try the heart, foul, and spirit, of every person, who is engaged in conflict with them. The concision (as the apostle calls the mere outward fign), the cutting round of the flesh only, might be accomplished, and hath been done in innumerable instances, where the grace denoted did not follow: but the piercing two-edged sword of God's word dividing afunder the foul, or carnal affections, and the spirit, or mind renewed, which is the true circumcifion, or (as the apostle names it) the circumcision made without hands \* of man; this is a very superior matter, and can only be accomplished by him, who made the everlafting covenant, and who makes this spiritual token of it to take place in those, whom in his mercy he hath brought into it. But this must be performed in every person, or the sign of the covenant is not upon him; and, confequently, he can draw no spititual comfort from any outward condition or circumstances in life. We are THE CIRCUMCISION (fays the apostle to some believers, who were, according to the outward rite, uncircumcifed) who worship God in the Spirit, and rejoice in Christ Fesus, and HAVE NO CONFIDENCE IN THE FLESH\*. Those only, who have the fign in the abstract, or within

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<sup>\*</sup> Col. ii. 11.

<sup>†</sup> Phil. iii 3.

them, are under the covenant, and interested in all its bleffings.

As none but the circumcifed among the Jews were admitted to the passover; so none but those, who are spiritually circumcifed by the word or law of God, can be partakers, or can truly defire to be partakers, of what the passover signified, even Christ and his falvation. To be uncircumcifed, was to be out of the covenant, or an alien to the commonwealth of Ifrael: to undergo circumcifion was fo necessary a mean of admission to the covenant, that it was sometimes called the covenant itself. Thus he, that hath fuffered (spiritually, and according to the intent of the fign) in the fiesh, bath ceased from sin \*: fin is not imputed to him, for Christ's sake: it doth not reign in him, through the power of his Spirit: he hath done with it as to its cause, and shall soon cease from it as to its being, for ever. He is one with Christ in the covenant of grace; and so one, as to be considered for a part or member of Christ himself, an unalienable heir and child of God, ordained, by the oath of the covenant, to an unalienable inheritance.

What a death's wound is here to the bady of the fins of the flesh +, to all Antinomianism of heart and life, to all Arminianism of carnal holiness, inherent

<sup>\* 1</sup> Pet. iv. 1.

<sup>†</sup> Col. ii. 11.

power, and self-righteousness! The sless and slessly mind, we see, are to be entirely circumcised by the Holy Spirit, as dead and filthy before God; and a new man is to take the rising power in the soul, created according to the image, and walking after the pattern, of HIM that created him.

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This was fignified by the injunction of circumcifion on the eighth day, which was a renewal or beginning of time; the subject of circumcision having remained in a state of nature and corruption one whole period of time, or week. Then it rose, as it were, from the dead, from the desolate places \* of the curse brought in by sin, and was anointed with fresh oil as a member of the church in the covenant of God.

It was not enough to live among the people of God; but perfonal circumcifion was so indispensable, that every one, who remained uncircumcifed, residing in the house or land of the Jews, and consequently

receive an cikel in the fleth, bus retrained

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appearing

<sup>\*</sup> Isa. lix. to. The word work, sepulchres, or desolate places, because sepulchres antiently were made in them, the places of the dead, stands in opposition to now a person strong and lively, or lusty, as our translation renders it concerning the men of valour, in Judg. iii. 29. It is the same root, from which the word light is derived. The primary idea is unction with oil. All that lives and thrives is replenished with oil. All that is confectated, or lives, to God, is anointed with oil, i. e. the Holy Spirit. The name of the day, now, in this view, implies the idea both of consecration and new life to the circumcised person before God.

appearing to belong to them, that foul was to be cut off from his people, as one guilty of schism to them, and of breach or rejection of the great covenant before God. The spiritual intention of this is equally obvious and important.

This facramental fign was also a feal, or testimony, both of God's right in his people, and of their inheritance in him. It was a seal of the righteousness of faith to Abraham: and the spiritual circumcission is also the seal of the Spirit in those, who are truly Abraham's seed——a seal, which cannot be lost, but abideth to the day of redemption. By this, God knows or owns them to be his; and by this they know themselves, if not others, to belong to God.

But persons might be and were circumcised in the stell, who knew no more of the great instruction signified thereby, than the idolatrous nations who copied the ceremony from the antient believers, or the present Mahometans who use it. Hence we read of people, who indeed were circumcised in the stell, but remained uncircumcised in beart, in lips, and in ears. To such, their circumcission became uncircumcision in the sight of God, a mere outward ceremony, a vain mark of distinction, without effect. Being mere natural men, notwithstanding all outward privileges, they could not receive, or hear, or understand, the things of the Spirit of God, but esteemed them for nothing, or foolishness. To whom (says Jeremiah) shall I speak and give

give warning? behold, their ear is uncircumcifed, and they cannot hearken: behold, the word of the Lord is unto them a reproach: they have no delight in it \*. Behold, the days come, faith the Lord, that I will punish all them which are circumcifed for (their) uncircumcifion [aurilary] Egypt, and Judah, and Edom, and the children of Ammon and Moab [names given in reproach to the carnal Israelites] and all that are in the utmost corners, that dwell in the wilderness [the carnal professors among the Gentiles] for all these nations are uncircumcifed, and all the house of Israel are uncircumcifed in heart †.

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Others rested in the rite, and in the external circumstances annexed to it. These they mistook for righteousness, and upon these grounded their hope of acceptance with God. And we know, by the example of some gracious souls in the early days of the Christian dispensation, how hard a thing it is to sless and blood to be divested of the prepossessions of education, and to look, with a single eye, to the intention only of those outward forms, which from our infancy have been inculcated upon us. What a marvellous circumstance did the calling of the Gentiles seem to Peter and his Jewish friends, in the history of Cornelius? A vision was imparted to take off the edge of the apostle's pre-

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<sup>\*</sup> Jer. vi. 10. compared with 1 Cor. ii. 14. and Acts vii. 51. 

† Jer. ix. 25, 26.

judices; and the miraculous effusion of the Holy Ghost. with much amazement, could only have removed those of his fellow-disciples. And yet this very thing was the frequent subject of all the prophecies, and was constantly fung by the Jews in the cxviith pfalm, which made a part of their daily worship in the temple. -But to him, that is circumcifed in the flesh, for the purpose of glorying in the flesh, or in its powers and righteousness, we have authority to say, though the institution was expressly from God, it shall be only a beggarly element, which can profit him nothing. The reason is given; whosoever is circumcifed for this purpose, that is, of pleasing God by a righteousness and ftrength of his own, effectually fets aside Christ, and makes himself a debtor to do the whole law. If he can perfectly perform it; well; he shall be justified by that perfect performance, and shall have its reward. But if he offend in one point; (and who hath not offended in ten thousand? ; he is guilty of all: he is a transgressor, who can never possibly justify himfelf in future, if ever he could cease from fin, by a law which he hath broken already. The conclusion is; that fallen man must either be justified by Christ, and so live by him, as the apostle declares he himself lived \*; or else not be justified at all, and therefore perish everlastingly.

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The circumcifion of the flesh was soon performed; but that of the foul is not only sharp, but progressive and long. The Holy Spirit is the great agent; and he employs a variety of instruments. The first and chief one is the word of God; and the law particularly is the keen sharpness of that word, which (as we have noticed) is compared to a two edged fword, all edge and point. But there are secondary and subordinate means, which are frequently and almost daily employed for the separation of the Christian soul, from the world, the flesh, and the devil. Afflictions, fanclified afflictions, are among other circumstances, used for this great design. They cut off the heart from inferior things, and difentangle it from a variety of lower engagements to a quicker and more entire devotedness to God. We are naturally so light in our minds, that we need frequent weights of trouble to keep us down. Losses, crosses, disappointments, perplexities, fickness, and the keen apprehensions of approaching death, are all of them made to be parts of the circumcifing knife, which, in the power of the Divine Spirit, severs the Christian from his own felf, and renders him more abstracted from every thing but God. To the men of the world, they have no fuch consequences, but inflict only despair, remorse, or difmay. Thus good and evil come from the hand of the Lord: evil for nothing but evil, to the chil-H 3 dren

dren of disobedience; but evil for good, and therefore all other things for good, to them that love him.

This cutting name (if it may be fo called) of true believers should induce great searchings of heart in all professors. "Do I pretend to belong to Christ; and am I circumcifed and cut off from the old man, the life of my evil nature, by his word and Spirit? Have I renounced indeed the devil and all his works, the pomps and vanities of this wicked world, and all the finful lusts of the flesh? Do I look upon my own strength, concerning falvation, as inherent weakness, my own wisdom as erring folly, and have I been led to abhor all the pretended righteousness of myself and other men as filthy rags? Do I lean upon Christ to fave me by his mercy through faith? Am I therefore praying for faith, and the increase of faith, by him? Is his word my only rule? and do I feek his Spirit as my great helper and guide? Am I, in the grace of that Spirit, and in entire dependence upon him, feeking for holiness and truth, walking in submission and refignation to his will, and striving above all things to fet forth his glory? Is the honor of the Lord and his cause dear to my heart? And can I bear any fort of reproaches, rather than that his bleffed gospel should be reproached through me? Do I live in the hope of this heavenly calling? Does the warm expectation of its iffue and end ever gladden my inmost foul? Am

Am I delighted in communion with God by prayer and praise, and in the faithful fellowship of his people? Is it my most fervent delire, that the kingdom should be the Lord's, with full sovereignty over myself and all the creatures; that the power should be his, and manifested and owned to be his, in the spiritual as well as natural world; and that the glory should be all his own, without mixture or abatement, for ever and ever ?"-Christian; are these the true and fincere desires of thy foul, above, without, against, all human approbation and gain? And canst thou appeal to the Searcher of hearts, that this is the prevailing bent of thy fpirit?---If fo; this work must be acknowledged to be the finger of God, the fealing of his spiritual circumcifion, the mark fet upon thee as his own portion for life eternal. Rejoice in the Lord, my Christian friend: and let all that know and love thy faith and hope rejoice in thy behalf. Thou haft the good portion; and it shall be well with thee for ever!

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## BAPTIZED.

il creatures a that the power inpould be his As circumcifion was the initiating ordinance into the church under the legal, so is baptism under the present, dispensation. The one rite sensibly exhibited the putting off the old man with his deeds; the other represents the putting on the new man, which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness. The former facrament preaches the necessity of alteration in life and principle; the latter flews wherein it confifts. They both cry down the attempt of making the old man good, according to the philosophy of reason; and jointly oppose all that false holines of corrupted nature, which not only militates against the true, but against truth itself revealed from heaven. There is no real holiness or religion in the world, but that which is imparted from the skies. EVERY GOOD GIFT, AND EVERY PERFECT GIFT, is from above, and cometh down from the Father of lights, with whom is no variableness, neither shadow of turning \*.

As Abraham and all believers, with their children, under the law, were circumcifed in the name

EXPLICATION

<sup>\*</sup> James i. 17.

of the Alehim \*, and thus were formally brought into the bond of the covenant; so believers, with their children, under the gospel, are privileged to be baptized into the fame name, only more expressly drawn out into that of Father, Son, and Holy Ghoft, and are thereby made inheritors of the same promises with the fathers. There is but one Lord, to whom they are dedicated; one faith, in which they believe and ferve him; one circumcision, or one baptism, by which they profess to belong to him. The general assembly of the first-born, whose names are written in heaven, make but one church, who have all been baptized into Christ and have put on Christ; where there is neither Jew nor Gentile, neither bond nor free, neither male nor female; but where they are all one in Christ Jesus +.

Of this the Ifraelites were reminded in that prophetic precept which enjoined, that as the members of the Jewish church were, so should the believing strangers, or proselyted Gentiles, who became members of that church, be, before the Lord ‡. And believers under the gospel should recollect, that they are not a new house, temple, or olive-tree, distinct and separate from that of the patriarchs and the Hebrews, but parts of the same one great house and temple, branches grafted into one antient olive-tree,

1 Numb. xv. 15, 16.

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<sup>\*.</sup> Gen. xvii. 7, 8. + Gal. iii. 28.

fellow-heirs, united brethren, and joint members, with all that have gone before them, in every spiritual privilege and mercy. We have no new religion; but the inseparable same, only under different forms adapted to different times, with the faithful Jews, and with their predecessors the patriarchs, up to Abel and Adam.

Indeed, they had their doctrine of baptisms as well as we, and much to the same signification \*: our distinct advantage in the sless that, now all things being sulfilled which related to Christ, the types and shadows of the law concerning those things are abated in sorce of practice, because no longer necessary when the things themselves have been manifested; and therefore two plain easy sacraments, for memorials, are instituted instead of a whole code of ceremonies, which were expressly imposed only till the time of reformation +, i. e. till Christ should come, and alter the dispensation.

The first of these sacraments (baptism) intimates a "death unto sin and a new birth unto righteousness; for being by nature born in sin, and the children of wrath, we are hereby [i. e. by his death and our new birth] made the children of grace." We

<sup>\*</sup> The learned reader may fee a great deal upon this subject in Seld. de Synedr. Hebr. 1. i. c. 3. p. 15—23. Edit. Franc. 1696. † Heb. ix. 10.

are in the unbelieving world at large, till by the outward rite we are brought into the professing church: and we are afterwards unbelievers in the world, till, by the thing signified in the rite, we are made "members of Christ, children of God, and inheritors of the kingdom of heaven."

When the foul is truly turned by the Lord unto himself, and is made deeply sensibly of fin by the convictions of the law; the first manifestation of mercy to it is to bring it to Christ the propitiation and atonement; and the next, to imbue it with the grace of the Holy Spirit, really if not in full display, to the conscience, that it may know, love, and enjoy, the bleffings of redemption. To this purpose is that remarkable passage-Let us draw near with a true heart, in full assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience, and our bodies washed with pure water \*. The apostle alludes to the figure in the ceremonial law, which prescribed the sprinkling of the blood of the facrifice upon the worshipper, and to the washing at the laver which stood near the altar; and, under the fymbol of this well-known ceremony, he invites the believing Hebrews to approach unto God, as finners, by the blood of Jesus the mediator, applied through faith, and by the washing of regeneration and renewing of the Holy Ghost.

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\* Hebr. x. 22.

Thus also they washed their garments under the idea of purification for the body, or the cloathing of the body \*; and they washed the body itself for the foul, under the spiritual intention of its being the garment of the foul +. They were to be clean throughout, not merely in putting away the filth of the flesh, or the literal impurity which may cleave to it, but in being cleansed from all inward filthiness of flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God: or (as the apostle expresses it elsewhere concerning the Corinthians) ye are washed, ye are sanctified, ye are justified, in the name of the Lord Jesus, and by, or in, the Spirit of our God. To this effect likewise is the allusion of clean garments, undefiled garments, walking in white raiment, the being without spot or wrinkle, and the like phrases; all which denote the purity, which is maintained in Christians, in part now but perfectly hereafter, by the cleanfing renovation of the Spirit of God. The like fense do our Lord's words convey, when he affirms, that except a man be born of water, and (then explaining what the water means) of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God. The type is to be used; but the spirit of the type must accompany it, or the type fails of its intention. If we trust in the form, we have nothing but the form; but if, through the

<sup>\*</sup> Exod. xix. 10. 14. Gen. xxxv. 2. † Lev. xiv. 8. xv. 13. Exod. xxx. 20. 2 Kings v. 14. Pf. li. 7. Ifa. iv. 4.

form, we reach after the substance; then the form hath attained its end, in our good and in the glory of him that ordained it. But, alas, upon the flightest view, what a falling off is here in the religious world? " There are multitudes (faid one of the most excellent of men) that are running headlong in the course tending to destruction, through the midft of all the means of falvation; even the faddeft way of all to it, -through word, and facraments, and all heavenly ordinances, walking hell-wards. Chriftians, and yet no Christians; baptized, and yet unbaptized.—But we have no other word nor other facraments to recommend, than those that have been used folong to no purpose: only we would call men, from the dead forms, to feek the living power of them, that they perish not \*."

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Of old, the apostle says of the Jews, all our fathers were under the cloud, and all passed through the sea; and were all baptized unto Moses in the cloud, and in the sea; but all believed not; and therefore they were overthrown in the wilderness. They all used the form and were equal partakers of the outward sign; but those only, who had faith, received the spiritual benefit and blessing; for by faith the just shall live.

Through this spiritual baptism, we are declared the thildren of God; as Christ was at his baptism; and

<sup>\*</sup> LEIGHTON's Com. on 1 Pet. iii. 21.

we by him. "I suppose (says the learned Mede) that, in that baptism of his, the mystery of all our baptisms was visibly acted; and that God says to every one truly baptized, as he said to him (in a proportionable sense); Thou art my Son, in whom I am well pleased. \*"

Those, who have been baptized indeed into Christ. do put on Christ +. They are cloathed with him. As Adam and Eve, the first of the church as well as of the world, were cloathed by God with the skins t, probably of victims, flain by his appointment for facrifice; and as the tabernacle afterwards, which was the figure of the church in Christ, was covered with rams' skins dyed red &, also facrificed, it is likely, at the altar: so all believers have a covering of Christ and his Spirit upon them, the robe of his righteoufness, the garments of his falvation parted among them, after they have beheld him as the atoning facrifice for their fins. And thus (fays the prophet, in that chapter, which is full of allufion to the ceremonial law and its intentions) upon all the glory shall be a defence, or rather, the glory shall be a covering over all: and thus there shall be a tabernacle for a shadow in the day-time from the heat (of temptation and trial), and for a place of refuge (from wrath), and for a covert from form and from

Difc. xvii.

t Gen. iii. 21.

<sup>+</sup> Gal. iii. 27.

<sup>§</sup> Exod. xxvi. 14.

rain, or when violence and perfecution of the ungodly come against them\*. This glory was Christ, under the well-known emblem of a cloud +, which shadowed the tabernacle, and afterwards filled the temple.

Baptism sometimes, though rarely, is used to denote sufferings, but still under the idea of purification. Thus the baptism of fire, with the Holy Ghost, is mentioned; because of its searching and purifying, as well as afflictive, nature; and because Christ will thoroughly purge his stoor, or church, by sorrows and trials. And thus also Christ speaks of this baptism for himself; because, through sufferings, he would be made a perfect Saviour; bearing, and bearing away, all the sins of his people laid upon him. This affliction was so great, that he says of it; I have a baptism to be baptized with; and how am I straitened till it be accomplished! If omnipotence found the curse due to sin so heavy and dread-

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\* Ifa. iv. 5, 6.

<sup>† 1</sup> Kings viii. 10. From pp, a cloud, as a type of Christ, comes pp a name for the Messiah among the Jews. Thus the bow of the covenant is, spiritually, in Christ. Gen. ix. 13. The glory of Jehovah appeared in the cloud. Exod. xvi. 10. xix. 9. et al. mult. The cloud of glory overshadowed the mercy-seat. Lev. xvi. 2. The cloud talked with Moses. Exod. xxxiii. 9. and conducted Israel. Numb. ix. 15, &c. The cloud overshadowed the disciples. Matt. xvii. 5. Christ will come in a cloud with power and great glory. Luke xxi. 27. Rev. i. 7. xiv. 14.

ful; O how should poor, feeble, sinners tremble, at the very thought of their sins being found, unpardoned, upon them!

Briefly; the whole matter, with respect to each of ourselves, comes to this. Am I baptized, not with water only (for, with this, cups, and tables, and fuch like things, are baptized \*); but also with, what the water fignifies, the gracious Spirit of the living God? Do I rest in the form, in the thing done, in the party or profession where it was done; or am I looking, through all this, to the daily renewing of my mind? Am I baptized indeed, not into a fect or denomination of Christians, but into Christ himself? And can I prove that I am thus baptized, by having put on Christ; by wearing him as my covering, by looking to him as my life, and by walking after him as my guide? Hath a real change passed upon me? Have I truly a new name, that is, a new nature, a new condition of life, in which all things are become new to me? Is the old Adam more and more dying and subdued; and is Christ, the new Adam, more powerful and triumphant within my foul? Are my evil tempers and dispositions in subjection; hath the spirit of judgement and the spirit of burning + passed

\* Mark vii 4. + Of this baptism of the divine Spirit the prophet speaks, in Isa. iv. And it shall come to pass that be that is left in Zion, and he that remaineth in Jerusalem, shall be called holy, even every one, that is written for life in Jerusalem. of

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in any measure upon me; and does the life of Christ appear, in its holy vigor, through all the circumstances of this mortal body? Do I use my Redeemer, both as the covering or atonement for my fin, and also as the head of divine influence to induce rightcousness and true holiness in my heart and conduct? Do I love his holy ways; and are all his commandments precious to me? Is it the loathing and abhorrence of my heart to offend my compassionate Mafter, or to walk in any paths but his own? Are my defires indeed towards him, and the remembrance of his holiness, daily? And am I waiting, in faith and patience, for my full redemption, when I shall see my dear Lord face to face, eye to eye, heart to heart, and enjoy him and his for ever and ever?-Verily, O Christian, if this be in thee and abound, thou hast the tokens of the kingdom of God upon thee. Go on, and prosper. He, that hath begun the good work, will carry it on and complete it to the day of Christ; when the sublimest thoughts of thy mind, and the widest wishes of thy heart, shall all be fulfilled, and more than fulfilled, without end.

rusalem. When the Lord shall have washed away the filth of the daughter of Zion, and shall have purged the blood of Jerusalem from within her, by the spirit of judgement, or decree, and by the spirit of burning.

Note: IN

JUSTIFIED.

## JUSTIFIED.

This word evidently means made righteous. The persons made righteous must, previous to their justification, have been unrighteous; and accordingly God is said to justify the ungodly\*. To justify one already righteous, would be the same absurdity, as to make whiteness white, or gold to be golden. Through faith in Christ, the poor and perishing sinner, stript of all other claims and pretensions, is justified or made righteous; yea, so righteous, as, in the sight of him, who cannot look upon iniquity, to be considered without spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing; nay more, to be presented, in the body of Christ, holy, and unblameable, and unreproveable in his sight. Thus much for the persection of their righteousness.

But whence have weak and dying mortals such a righteousness as this? Do they find it in themselves? Do they work it out? Can they produce or procure it, for themselves? Common experience shews, that there is not a man upon earth, that there never was a saint born of woman, that it is not indeed in the present nature of man, to have or to exhibit any

\* Rom. iv. 5.

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righteousness of this kind. As man now is, a perfect inherent righteousness is "a non-entity of impossibility." The world, accustomed as it ever hath been since the fall to imperfections, would call a pretender of this fort, as it hath called the mere notion of such an one already,—" a faultless monster:"—a being on earth, totally different from all others. The word of God, which is better authority, represents man, both in his body and his soul\*, as equally weak and wicked by nature; and

\* By the FALL, all the faculties of the foul and all the properties of the body, are become corrupt and depraved: fo that there is no whole part left in either, according to the present constitution or nature. It is not an unapt illustration of this matter, which is given us from an antient Rabbi. "The body and foul may endeavour to exculpate each other in judgement: but how?—The body might fay; It was the foul that finned: for, presently, when she is departed from me, I am thrown into a grave like an insensible stone: - But the foul might answer; it was indeed the body which finned: for, as foon as I am released from that unhappy conjunction, I fly through the air like a bird." Upon this statement, the rabbi decides by a parable. " A certain king appointed two watchmen to defend the fruits of his fertile and beautiful garden, the one of whom was lame and the other blind. They were equally tempted to eat of their delicious charge. The lame man, therefore, suggested to the blind, that, if he would take him upon his shoulders, he would gather a fufficient quantity, which should be shared between them. The blind man con ented; and the fruit was carried off. After some time the king paid a visit to his garden, and demanded what was become of his fruit. The blind man faid; it was impossible for him to steal

declares even the believer, after grace received too, to be still clogged with infirmities; to be deceived if he presume at any time to say, that he hath no sin; to have a law of sin warring in his members, and a body of sin under which he must struggle and groan, till in death he is and shall be delivered from it.

This matter of fact then demonstrates, that the righteousness of the justified is not and cannot be inherent; not wrought out by themselves; not derived from any creature. The word of God also is very clear and explicit upon this momentous subject, and shews, on the one hand, that it is not by works of righteousness, which the justified have done, or can do, that they are saved, though they certainly are enabled to do what are really such, beyond all other men; but that in Jehovah all the seed of Israel, the whole church of God, are justified, and shall glory; or, as it is expressed in another place, their righteousness is of me, saith Jehovah.

it, for he had no eyes to find it out. And the lame man urged, that he loss could not be laid upon him; for he had no power to fir a foot. But, when their lord found out the truth of the matter, he commanded the one to be taken up on the shoulders of the other, and, in that state, that both should be punished together. In like manner (fays R. Juda Hakkadojh) will God clothe the soul again with the body in the last day, and for mutual sins condemn them both together." Gemara Sanbed. apud Wits. in symb. p. 483.

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It would be endless to quote the texts, which affert this doctrine. The whole Bible is full of it; and its whole system stands upon it. The ceremonial law, with all its rites, would be absurd without it. The prophets, speaking by the Holy Ghost, continually maintain it, as the first of mercies, and the greatest of privileges. And our Lord and his apostles cannot be understood, but upon the supposition of this truth, which is one of the prime sinews of the gospel, and one most important part of its grand design. Take away this perfect justification by the perfect febouah; and every man must live and die A sinner, and consequently under the ban of the perfect law, and a subject of eternal destruction.

No righteousness but a perfect righteousness can justify at all, and much less before a holy God. Indeed, nothing short of perfection can equal the perfect requirements of the holy law, and, consequently, cannot deserve the name of righteousness. Evil may appear to be good among men; but, however subtle, or covered, or mixed, cannot escape the detection and abhorrence of God. The gospel, therefore, by which I mean the whole word of truth from Genesis to the Revelation, proposes no other righteousness for justification, than a complete one; and for this purpose constantly exhibits a divine person, able to procure righteousness and therefore

able to fave; capable of bestowing righteousness, and therefore not a creature who needs all his own, and who cannot have to spare; and infinite to make righteousness endure, and therefore to bring in an everlasting righteousness.

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But how can one receive the righteousness of ano. ther? - Exactly in the way, whereby one received the fin of another; and this was undoubtedly by imputation. Christ was without fin; and yet he bare fin: Christ was separate from sinners; and yet he died, and was made fin, and for fin a curse, in behalf of finners. He is not faid to be made a finner (for that he was not, nor could be, in himfelf) but fin in the abstract, that is, bearing imputatively all the fins and finfulness of all his people, and in this respect having no whole place in his body, none but what was under this imputation, and confequently under execration. Their fins were reckoned to him; or he could not rightly or to any purpose have suffered, the just for the unjust. He certainly could not have had fo strong a censure as to be accursed, but because of transgressions; and therefore, as he had and could have none of his own, the transgressions of others must have been imputed \* to him and taken

<sup>\*</sup> Even Tillotson allows this, and says expressly, that "Christ bore our fins by way of imputation, and sunered for them in our stead, as the sacrince was supposed to do for the sinner. This is evident beyond all denial." Serm. before the Queen, on Heb. ix. 26. p. 25.

upon him. In like manner, finners cannot be juftified, or stand righteous, in the court of conscience or of heaven, by their own doings; for, be they as moral as they can be (supposing for a moment, that, as finners, they could have any real morality at all) they could not offer a righteousness without flaw, much less a righteousness delightful to God \*, and certainly not an infinite and everlasting righteousness, which only can afford a proper title to everlasting life and glory. As their condemning fin was tranfferred by imputation to another, who was able to bear it and to make an end of it; so their justifying righteousness must be their's by a like imputation from ONE, able to produce and to prefent it in their behalf. Accordingly we are told, and told by the Holy Ghost in the strongest language, as well as by numerous institutions most forcibly representing the fact; that, as by one man's disobedience many were made sinners, so, by the obedience of ONE, shall many be made righteous +. One whole chapter is employed to declare, that this righteoufness, justifying the foul before God, is entirely by imputation; and that the grace of faith is chiefly occupied, in embracing this righteousness for that imputation t.

In this important fense also do I understand the remarkable prophecy of Joel, quoted by the apostle

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<sup>\*</sup> Isa. xlii. 21. 1 See Rom. iv.

<sup>†</sup> Rom. v. 19.

Peter in his first sermon on the day of pentecost. The Spirit was to be poured out upon all flesh, i. e. God's people both of the Jews and Gentiles, in the last days or dispensation, as a testimony and seal, that Christ had finished the work of salvation: and thus God would there wonders in heaven above, and figns in the earth beneath; which were; BLOOD, the blood of Christ expiating sin; FIRE, the wrath of the Father taking vengeance upon him, when bearing fin; and VAPOUR, or PILLARS, of SMOKE, the fweet-smelling favor (alluding to the Levitical sacrifices) of the Redeemer's merits and atonement, ascending up victoriously in palm-like columns, by the power of the Holy Spirit. Thus God is wellpleafed with his people for Christ's fake; and his people are completely justified by Christ, and so have access through him by one Spirit to the Father.

In this new condition or state, they are privileged to come boldly, freely, and with open face \*, before God in prayer and in duty; and they are received graciously by him, as recti in curia, upright and

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<sup>.</sup> This may ferve to explain the injunction of covering and uncovering in 1 Cor. xi .- Man is by nature faulty, and therefore ought to be covered: Christ is faultless, and so may justly stand aperto vultu. But, as man represents Christ in his church, who is all perfection, he is for that reason to be uncovered: and as the woman stands for the human nature, which hath no perfection of its own, and therefore nothing to boast of, The ought to be covered or hidden.

clear at his tribunal, and justified entirely from all the things, which his law and justice could require of them, and for which his law and justice have received ample satisfaction from the hands of their surety.

While this righteousness justifies the sinner, it proves the divinity of the SAVIOUR, who is therefore styled, in behalf of his people, with equal love and consistency, Jehovah our righteousness. But, as this hath been copiously insisted upon in another place \*, it is the less needful to dwell upon it here; and especially as it hath not been answered, and, perhaps upon the data of the Bible, will not easily be resuted.

Our English church, and all the other Protestant churches, have insisted upon this great truth, in their holy services, in their confessions of faith, and in their public homilies or declarations +. It is the grand

\* Horæ Solit. Vol i. p. 50. &c. 2d. edit. † Syntagma Confess. Fidei. English Homilies. Hooker's Eccl. Pol. B. v. Beveridge's Serm. Vol. v. p. 99. cum multis aliis.

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Among others, it may not be unwelcome to the reader, if a remarkable opinion on this subject be offered, even from an antient Romish Cardinal. This was the famous Cantarini, a noble Venetian, one of the most pious and learned men of that church, and esteemed as such by the Protestants themselves, as Sleidan relates in his Com. lib. xiv. Whatever errors he might hold as a Papist, he was certainly a Protestant in the doctrine of justification, and, for this his suspected inclination towards the reformation, was said to have

basis of the reformation. It is more; it is (as Luther said) articulus stantis vel cadentis ecclesia, that very article, on which the church of God itself will

been poisoned by some emissaries of Rome in the year 1542. Very different indeed was his principle upon this head from the double justification, which his brother Cardinal Bellarmine fince invented; and which the Papists, and some called Protestants too, have adopted after him; as may appear from the following quota-Quoniam ad DUPLICEM JUSTITIAM pervenimus per fidem, justitiam inhærentem nobis, et charitatem, ac gratiam, qua efficimur consortes divinæ naturæ; et justitiam Christi, nobis donatam et imputatam, quoniam inserti sumus Christo et induimus Christum, restat inquirere utranam debeamus niti, et existimare, nos justificari coram Deo, i. e. sanctos et justos haberi? Ego prorsus existimo, piè et Christiane dici quod debeamus niti, niti inquam, tanquam re stabili, quæ certo nos sustentat, justitia Christi NOBIS DONATA, non autem sanctitate et gratia nobis inhærente. Hæc etenim nostra justitia est inchoata et imperfecta, quæ tueri nos non potest, quin in multis offendamus, quin assiduè peccemus. Idcirco in conspectu Dei non possumus ob banc justitiam nostram haberi justi et boni, quemadmodum deceret filios Dei eje bonos et fanctos. Sed justitia Christi nobis donata est vera et persecta justitia, quæ omnino placet oculis Dei, in qua nihil est quod Deum offendat, quod Deo non summopere placeat. HAC ergo SOLA, certa, et stabili nobis nitendum est, et ob eam solam credere, nos justificari coram Deo, id est, justos haberi et dici justos. De Justif. apud Amesii Bell. enerv. Tom. iv. l. vi. Thus a Papist himself could dare to write before the existence of the council of Trent, which increased and established the errors of the Romish church, as fatally as Laud, and his affociates and followers, have poisoned our English church with the dregs of Arminianism, and fome other opinions, not very diffimilar to those of Rome, as stated by the council of Trent.

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either stand or fall; or, if I may use the words of a learned Bishop now living, "it is the very corner-stone of the whole system of redemption \*."

The holy garments, prescribed for the priests under the law, eminently figured that robe of righteousness, which believers assume by faith from the Lord their righteousness. As the legal priests could not minister before God without them; so the faithful, who are the true priefts, cannot appear or act acceptably, but as clothed and justified by their Redeemer. He is emphatically and univerfally their righteousness in this view; and fo they are faid to be found in him, to put him on, to live in him, &c. In this view also it is, that the outward fign of the prophecy is spiritually accomplished; they part my garments among them, and cast lots upon my vesture. The finners who crucified him, i. e. those finners, for whom he died, and but for whom he had never been crucified at all, parted his garments among them, and obtained each his share in him who is the covering of his people; and they obtained by lot, or according to God's disposal (as Canaan

<sup>\*</sup> See Bishop Horsley's charge to the Diocese of St. David's, p. 7. In this excellent piece, which demands, as well for its author as for its own weight, the most attentive and general perusal, are admirably stated, the true distinction between religion and mere morality, and the necessity of insisting upon the doctrine of justification, in order to root out some common errors, and to promote real Christianity and godliness of life.

itself was allotted) that interest in the indivisible vefture, by which they are clothed upon, as comprizing in itself life immortal. They were to be many sons brought into one possession. Hence their Saviour was to be stripped and made naked as a slave and a sinner, to be broken and divided as a man, in order to clothe them with himself and his righteousness, and thus to unite them through himfelf, (as his own human nature was united) unto God. They receive him distributively, as the bread broken and the blood fprinkled or distributed for righteousness and atonement; and they enjoy him collectively, as one respecting his divinity with God, and one respecting his humanity with them to bring them to God, according to special purpose and appointment; unknown at first to man, as the falling of a lot is, but from the beginning well known to him, who folely disposes all things, according to the counsel of his own will. Hence the triumph of the church: I will greatly rejoice in the Lord, my foul shall be joyful in my God, for HE hath clothed me with the garments of salvation, or of the Saviour, HE hath covered me with the robe of righteousness; as a bridegroom por decketh, or clothes himself as a priest, with ornaments, and as a bride adorneth herself with her jewels \*.

As garments clothe the body; fo the body itself is

<sup>.</sup> Ifa. lxi. 10.

faid to clothe the foul \*. Alluding to this, righteoufness is called a garment; because without it, in God's fight, a man is esteemed naked, that is, unseemly and unclean. And this garment of righteousness is sometimes represented under the image of white linnen, as an emblem of spotless purity, which will be kept undefiled in heaven, and which ought to be preserved in all possible cleanness here below. The same idea is conveyed by covering the ark, and many of the utenfils of the tabernacle and temple, with gold, as a fubitance the most precious and pure of all others. The clothing of the church is, in this symbolical sense, of wrought gold +, bright and beautiful; or, according to the thing fignified, all-glorious within. The wedding garment, and the arraying of the Lamb's wife in fine linnen, clean and white, exhibit the same image of the righteousness of Christ, which is granted to his church and people, and which, because it is given to them and put upon them, is made their own virtually, and therefore denominated the righteousness of saints t. This is the matter of their justification before Jehovah; not their own doings, either before or after the reception of grace; not their holiest frames, or defires; not, in whole or in part, their own felves.

† Pf. xlv. 13. ‡ Rev. xix. 8.

<sup>\* 2</sup> Cor. v. 4. et al. So Christ's garments are said to be rolled in blood; i. e. his body was wounded to death, and became unclean for the sins of his people.

Christ, the victim or facrifice for his people, clothes with his own garment of righteousness all that belong to him \*.

This garment, like that of the priest's under the law, can only be worn in Christ the true tabernacle which God hath pitched and not man, and must not be profaned by persons not anointed as spiritual priests, or used to purposes not fanctified by his Holy Spirit. The word of God treats with abhorrence the very mention of the garment spotted by the sless: that is, whatever proceeds from the carnal mind which is filthy and unclean in the sight of God. Its principle and end must be evil, because it originates in sin, and is directed to self, in opposition to the grace which always seeks the divine glory.

This doctrine of free and full justification by faith

\* This is intimated by Gen. iii. 21. Exod. xxv. 11.

21. xxvi. 4. and many other places.

Possibly, according to the emblematic and allegorical style of the Old Testament, whose histories, though of private persons, are not of private interpretation, the circumstances of the birth of Esau and Jacob are to be understood as descriptive prophecies of their different characters. The one was born red, when of the earth earthy, and covered as with an hairy garment, a clothing derived from sallen animal nature; and so he became, like Nimrod, a man of the field, a man of the earth, a mere worldling: the other was born without such a covering (as all God's children are new born without trust in themselves) and became on we a persest man, (See Ps. xxxvii. 37,) a dweller in tents, a real pilgrim upon earth, and worshipper of the Lord.

through the righteousness of the God-man Christ Jesus, is a most precious and consolatory truth to a weary and heavy-laden foul, who only can know the worth of it. In those trying hours, when the conscience accuses, and the law condemns, and God's righteous justice feems to cry aloud for vengeance, upon account of a finful heart and finful life; then to hear of a perfect and free forgiveness, a release from thraldom, a deliverance from bondage, and the best robe of righteousness both to cover defects and to afford a welcome title to the marriage of the Lamb and all its happiness; this is good news indeed, this is the gospel itself, these are those very glad tidings of great joy, which the spirit of the felf-convicted finner pants for, and which lift up his admiring foul with a burst of unspeakable praise, for fo furprifing a mercy. None but those, to whom God has granted repentance unto life, can understand what all this means; but those conceive it well, and find great delight in looking back upon, what is called in scripture, the day of their espousals.

It is this falutary truth, which chears the heart of the believer in the whole course of his pilgrimage, and which is (as it were) the sheet-anchor of all his hopes. It is not human faithfulness, or strength, or any thing else, either real or supposed, in man, which establishes a certain hope; it is the grace, bestowing justification through faith, that

makes the promise sure to all the seed, and exempts them, as members of Christ, living and walking by his Spirit, from future condemnation. The blood and righteousness, which satisfy God and all his attributes, may well fatisfy them. When therefore trials and afflictions visit the Christian, and visit him (as they are always employed to do) in love, and for the increase of faith and holiness; he can say: " True, these things are grievous and distressing to flesh and blood, and they wear my outward man down to the ground, for which purpose they are permitted to come; but, notwithstanding, my foundation is fure, my Redeemer is faithful, his strength and righteousness are everlasting to support and justify me, he hath mercifully given me these, he employs nothing and takes away nothing but for my good, his Spirit teaches and refreshes my foul under all my weariness and pain, and soon the end shall come, when all shall be well with me, and I shall enjoy my Lord, my life and portion, beyond the storms of evil and of time, for ever and ever. Then every mystery and every mysterious path shall be made plain and clear, and be proved to have been the ftraitest and the best for my journey to heaven Then the tapeftry (as one expresses it) shall be turned, and all its figures appear beautiful and proportionate, the back-ground of which feems fo Arange and confused to my present view. Then the

the building, now scattered in its members, shall be found to have been fitly framed indeed by an unerring mind and an almighty hand, when brought part to its part and fet up in its long-concerted order and arrangement. O my Lord, when I confider these things, I am ashamed of myself, that I should ever be fo mad and fo foolish, as to murmur and repine at thy providential dispensations, which, being meant by thee for my good, must of necessity accomplish it at the last. Let me hold fast thy firm word of truth, and thine everlasting righteousness; the one affuring me of thy faithfulness, and the other of my indefectible portion; and then let me exult with the most lively faith and joy, in language taught by thine own Spirit; I am persuaded, that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate ME from the love of God, which is in Christ Fesus MY Lord!"

This is the voice, this the privilege, of a Christian.—Pray, dear reader, that it may be thine. Thou mayest repent of the joys and forrows of the world, which only work death; but of these joys and these sorrows, issuing from the love and providential care of an heavenly Father and kind Redeemer, there can be no thought of repentance, no approach of change, world without end.

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SAINTS.

## SAINTS.

THIS is one of the most glorious titles of the children of God, and fo peculiarly their own, that the rest of mankind readily despise and renounce the name. The persons, who seek a right to it and declare their hope of its participation, are, decidedly and at once, the object of Jehovah's love, and of this world's abhorrence and contempt. But as there is scarce a name so frequently applied to them in the holy scriptures, as this, respecting their state both in earth or heaven; they must be content with all the conturnely, that can be thrown upon one of the holiest of denominations, and go forth without the camp of the world, bearing the reproach of him, who bestowed it upon them, with all the future bleffedness connected with it.

The Hebrew name, applied to persons, describes them as devoted, destined, prepared, sanctified, or set apart, in a state of distinction or abstraction from the multitude of mankind, by the will and power of God, to the service and glory of God. Agreeable to this radical idea of the name, are all the doctrines and providences of the bible inculcated,

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cated, applied, and performed. The doctrines, as they appear either in representations or prophecies under the Old Testament, and in more express terms under the New; and the providences, as they came to pass and were fulfilled from age to age; are all in harmony with this great truth implied under this great name, that God hath chosen to himself a peculiar people out of the nations of the earth, that they are set apart to himself from the profanations of a wicked world, that they are prepared accordingly by his holy Spirit for an heavenly life, and that they shall most certainly, notwithstanding all opposition and enmity from earth and hell, attain to the everlasting possession of the kingdom of glory.

To exhibit this gracious privilege, there are many applications of this term fanctified or holy both to perfons and things. Abel was accepted, and not Cain; Facob, and not Esau; Foseph and David rather than their brethren; and, omitting many other personal examples, the whole nation of the Jews, by way of prophetic or doctrinal similitude, and the national rejection for a time of all others. Again; particular stations, services, portions, privileges, sacrifices, were appointed by God to the priests under the law, all of which were set apart or sanctified to them from all others. In like manner, certain vessels, made of the same materials

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with other veffels, were devoted to the fanctuary, and so became veffels of honor for the great Master's use; and, in one word, the fanctuary itself, the eminent type of Christ and his people, was prepared, dedicated, made holy to the Lord, and not to be profaned by the very foot of a stranger, or one out of the covenant. It is but the fame idea in the New Testament, where the apo-Itle speaks of presenting the church as a chaste virgin to Christ, her betrothed husband; having wedding-garments, which were always prepared and bestowed distinctly and individually upon the several guests; of washing those garments of falvation, and making them white, or pure, in the blood of the Lamb; with many other things of the like fignification feattered through the holy word. The full fignification of all these various figures and fymbols, is comprehended in that one declaration of Christ; for their sakes I sanctify myself, that they also might be sanctified through the TRUTH \*. The crown of the anointing oil of the ALEHIM was upon him, the true Nazarene +, separated from fin and undefiled by finners, that he might be able to make a perfect atonement; and, by making it for his people, to separate them also from

viii. 9. 12. Gen. xlix. 26. † Compare Lev. xxi. 12.

til and its effects, and to fanctify them by his Holy Spirit, who is the truth and the author of it.

From these premises it manifestly appears, that all this sanctification, or separation, of the redeemed arises from the will and purpose of God; and, as his will and purpose are, like Himself, from everlasting to everlasting; it follows, that sanctification is neither more nor less than the eternal election and design of God brought into act in the appointed season, called the fulness or measure of time, which act must surely and entirely be accomplished, above all molestation or hindrance.

Agreeable to this, it is written of these saints and strangers in the world, that they are elect according to the foreknowledge of God the Father, through sanctification of the Spirit unto obedience, and sprinkling of the blood of fesus Christ\*; that they are chosen out of the world, by Christ, and ordained or made to stand; that they are therefore hated by the world, and are no longer of the world; that they are the objects of Christ's love and prayer in absolute distinction from the world, who said, I pray for them; I pray not for the world; and that, sinally, they are gathered, without the failure of one, to the heaven of glory.

The Greek name for faint is less full than the

. 1 Pet. i. 2.

Hebrew, and chiefly implies a general feparation or abstraction of foul from the world. It may be and has been properly rendered, not earthly, or, not of the earth. The title, though negative, is of great fignification; as may be easily seen from what it is opposed to. Thus Abel offered in faith, looking to Christ for redemption and heaven: but Cain brought of the fruit of the ground, as a tiller (or rather fervant, עבר) of the ground, a mere man of the world, and expected most probably a wonderful gratification in all earthly things from his formal and carnal homage to his Maker. Efau, the carnal worker as his name fignifies) was also a man of the field, a mere worldling who fought his fupport and delight from the earth, and valued a mess of pottage, more than his spiritual privilege, and from hence had his name Edom, one, like the foil, and of the foil from whence he was taken, born hairy like the goats, whom he refembled in that name, and nature, expecting all his support from his own skill and labour, and from the influences and productions of the material world. Jacob, on the contrary, was onwy, not a plain, but a perfect man, one made so in Christ, (as in Pf. xxxvii. 37.) dwelling in tents; i. e. either a pilgrim or stranger upon earth (as Heb. xi. 9.) or a worshipper of God in the tabernacles, or places of worship, then used by the faithful. men of the earth, or world, as the scriptures frequently

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quently style them, are all Nimrods or Edomites, mighty hunters against the faces or persons of Jehovah, or violent persecutors and enemies of his people. He that is born after the sless, and is of the sless, ever did and ever will, to the end of time, persecute him that is born after the Spirit\*. Hence, when the nation of the Jews, though primarily selected as to outward condition and privilege typisying

\* Gal. iv. 29. This forcibly implies the necessity of regeneration. We cannot know the things of God, or approach in real worship to God, by our carnal nature, which is weak because it is wicked, and spiritually dead because contrary to and incapable of the actions of spiritual life. Hence the reason of the figure or ceremony, delivered to Moses in Exod. iii. 5. put off thy shoes from off thy feet, for the place whereon thou standest is holy ground. This acknowledgement of a man's own baseness or unworthiness, this pulling off the shoe, this keeping or observing of the foot, (as it is called in Eccles. v. 1.) is, in the mental fense, the putting off, concerning the former conversation, the old man, which is corrupt according to the deceitful lusts, and the being humbled in the confideration of it, whenever we would prefent ourselves before the Lord, who cannot look upon iniquity without abhorrence. Hence, in the parable of the prodigal fon, who was naked, bungry, and unspood; vile as vileness, and wretched as wretchedness, itself; representing therein the undone state of man by nature; we may perceive, that a wonderful change was made in his condition by the gratuitous acceptance of his father. 1. He was endowed with the best robe, the robe of righteousness. 2. He had a ring put on his hand; the seal and pledge of the Holy Spirit, and of his beingtaken into the covenant. 3. He had a covering for his feet; intimating, the removal of his vileness, and the new obedience of his life and conduct. Luke xv. 22.

the inward, became generally carnal and worldly; they are reproved by a variety of heathen, polluted, or fignificant names, descriptive of their true state in the fight of God. Thus they are called rulers of Sodom and people of Gomorah \*, Babylon because of confusion; Moab, because of their pride; Dimon, because of their bloody guilt in persecuting God's witnesses; Damascus, because they should be left childless, i. e. lose their birth-right as the Lord's rejected +; Ephraim, in the same place and many others t, from their defire of only carnal plenty and fertility; an empty and waste land &, or vineyard |; Ariel, once the lion of God, but then plunged in forrow and weakness because of sin q; Edom, because of their earthly mind, which coveted the things of the world rather than the things of God \*\*.

From all this we may perceive, that no name, family, or nation; no outward church, or profession

<sup>\*</sup> Isa. i. 10. † Compare Isa. xvii. 1, 2. with Gen. xv. 2. Amos iii. 12. and Rom. ix. 6, 7, 8.

<sup>†</sup> Isa. xxviii. 1, 14. Ps. lxxxviii. 9. Jer. xxxi. 9. § Isa. xxiv. 1, &c. || Isa. v. 5.

<sup>§</sup> Isa. xxiv. 1, &c. || Isa. v. 5.

¶ Isa. xxiv. 1, &c. || \*\* Isa. lxiii. 1. See also the prophecies of Amos and Obadiah, where, covertly, and perhaps primarily, under the heathen names, the punishment and dereliction of the Jews are awefully foretold. This changing of names, in prophecy both of good and evil, is very frequent in the scriptures: thus Abram and Sarah, and Jacob, received names of promise; and Esau, and Pashur (Jer. xx.) and the Israelites at large (Hos. i. 6. Psalm xxii. 12. Amos iv. 1.) titles of denunciation or abasement.

of religion; can either make or keep a man a faint; but that it is a fpiritual and essential distinction, freely conferred by God on whom he chooses, and powerfully accomplished by him in the objects of his choice, whom therefore he fanctifies to himself through Christ, and redeems from the earth, that they may be partakers of his glory. The distinction is as essential as that between sheep and goats; of whom, the one are holy because redeemed by him who bare their sins for them, and the other unholy, because (according to the representation in the law) they are sin-bearers, that is, bearers of their own sins, in the sight of God, in their own proper persons, and therefore perishing from his presence.

These sanctified or separated ones prove their calling by its effects. They do not appeal to the hidden volume of God's decrees, but to the open book of their faithful lives. They boast not of good works, but do them; and, in doing them, own from whom they derived the power, not only of the act, but of the very thought and occasion, which preceded it. They are not servants of the earth, though for a while they live upon it; but servants of God, on whose love and bounty, which never sail them, they depend for all things. Nor do they seed, like the men of the world, upon dust, the serpent's food and curse, nor upon the busks or vile trash

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trash of sin and evil which those husks denote; but upon the food of the GREAT ONES, the bread of covenanted grace and peace, the flesh and blood, the righteousness and propitiation, of their great Redeemer. It is their fubfistence, their very life, love, and defire, to be holy and devoted to him in their persons, and to be abundantly fruitful in every good word and work, through him, in their converfations. This was fignified under the law by the prohibition of eating what is therein called uncircumcifed fruit, or feeding on certain devoted things in any other place than what the LORD should choose to appear in. The spiritual support of the children of God is all covenanted mercy, enjoyed by them under the true circumcision of the Spirit, and in the presence, or faith in the presence, of the Lord that bought them. And to them are realized those charming prophecies; Jehovah hath fworn by his right hand, and by the arm of his strength; surely, I will no more give thy corn to be meat for thine enemies, and the sons of the stranger shall not drink thy wine, for the which thou hast laboured: but they, that have gathered it, shall eat it, and praise JEHOVAH; and they, that have brought it together, shall drink it in the courts of my holinefs .- He shall druell on high; his place of defence shall be the munition of rocks; bread shall be given him; his waters shall be sure. THINE

THINE EYES SHALL SEE THE KING IN HIS BEAUTY.\*

If this be true; and true it is, if any fact was ever true; we may fay with the incomparable Leighton, that "we need not then that poor shift for the preffing of holiness and obedience upon men, to reprefent it to them as the meriting cause of salvation. This is not at all to the purpose, seeing, without it, the necessity of holiness to salvation is pressing enough; for holiness is no less necessary to salvation, than if it were the meriting cause of it; it is as inseparably tied to it in the purpose of God."

Let no man then despise the name of saint, but rather pray for grace to become one. And let him, who is such in reality, study to prove his right to the glorious title more and more, as he values the consolation of his own mind, and the honor of his heavenly Master. In a little time the Lord shall come, in the greatness of his power, to be gloristed in his saints, and to be admired in all them that believe. Then shall thousand thousands minister unto him, and ten thousand times ten thousand stand before him. And then shall the saints of the most high, whose lives were counted folly and their end without honor by a mad and evil world, take the kingdom, and posses the kingdom for ever, even for ever and ever. So be it, Lord Jesus; come quickly: Amen.

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<sup>\*</sup> Isa. lxii. 8, 9. xxxiii. 16, 17. with Lev. xix. 23—25. Deut. xii. 17, 18.

## ZEALOUS OF GOOD WORKS.

Zeal for God, and for all that belongs to his truth and glory, well becomes a Christian. Without this wise and holy zeal, whatever be his opinions, however great his knowledge or his fame, he will scarce deserve the title. True zeal springs from grace in the heart and affections; and, without the engagement of these, the employment of all our other faculties is but of little worth in the sight of God.

By good works may be fairly understood the whole compass of goodness, as it can be exercised by a Christian. No other person can really persorm them at all; and the Christian only as he is enabled by that, which makes him a Christian, and distinguishes him from all other men. He is a part of the new creation, the renovated workmanship of God, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained or prepared, that he should walk in them\*. God prepared him for the works, and the works for him, to the praise of the glory of his own grace by Christ Jesus.

When a man is made a Christian indeed, he is brought into union and fellowship with Christ. By

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this union he receives from him falvation and all the things which accompany it. To illustrate this, our Lord fets before us a lively figure. He calls himfelf a vine, and his people the branches; and tells his disciples, that as the branch cannot bear fruit of itfelf, except it abide in the vine; no more can ye, except ye abide in me. These words shew the necessity of this union, before the fruit can be produced; and the necessity of fruit after the union, by the words of the whole context \*. The head and the members give another image of the fame truth. The members can have no direction, action, or even life, but by continual union with their head; nor can the members of Christ, in a spiritual sense, without him +. Christ will not cease to actuate his members: they cannot be feparated from him: and, in his action upon them, and in their activity by him, confift all their comfort and holiness, undivided from his person and glory.

This is the principle of works properly good; for all the works, which are "otherwise done than as

<sup>\*</sup> See John xv. — 8. It is the just remark of an able and eminent divine; "as surely as the vine-branch can have no powers independant of the root, so surely cannot the Christian think, act, or live as such, but so far only as he derives his abilities from the stock upon which he is engrafted," Jones's Inquiry upon the Spring. p. 36. Nothing can be said more strongly, in the way of concession, for free grace, nor more directly against free-will and self-righteousness, + John xv. 5.

God hath willed and commanded them to be done," are not intrinsecally good, in their agents, however they may conduce to the service of others; but are, on the contrary, dressed and disguised sins, produced by the natural man, in a selfish way for carnal ends, without the life of God, or true respect for his glory.

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As Christ is the pattern of Christian holines, so he is the main-spring and motive of all its duties within the soul. Like the sap throughout the vine; so Christ sweetly and richly diffuses his Holy Spirit through all his spiritual branches, causing them to be fruitful, in a gracious similarity to himself and to each other, and also establishing their fruit so as to remain. They are not like the barren sig-tree, which was accursed in having only the fair, large, wide-spreading leaves of profession; but they beat a rich and ripe product in due season, because, from their root or stock, Christ Jesus, is their fruit certainly found \*.

<sup>\*</sup> The allusion is to Mark xi. 13. which might have been translated thus; and seeing a fig-tree afar off, having leaves, he came, if therefore he might find any thing thereon: and when he came to it, he found nothing but leaves; for where he was (i. e. then) was the time of figs. This was primarily directed to the Jewish church, from whom Christ did not expect fruit out of season, as may be seen from another parable to the same purpose, in Mark xii 2. Luke xx. 10. And it is also applicable to every individual professor of Christianity, whose faith must be proved by its fruits and justified by its works, or else he will be cast forth as a barren branch

He hath left us an example, that we should tread in his steps; and as we delight to imitate those whom we love (for true love ever induces likeness), 10, without any harsh or dull constraint which can only flew that our hearts are not engaged in the business, shall we copy our dear Redeemer in all that he hath fet before us. It will be our meat and drink, our necessary, our constant, gratification and happiness, to go after his will. It will be even our will too; and contrary to our will not to go after his. As the stream of a river freely flows through its course, according to the laws of providence; so the spirit of a Christian, turned aright, tends towards Christ with a willing affection, according to the order and in the way appointed for him. This is the principle of all holy obedience in a Christian. His heart and foul are in it; whereas none but a Christian's ever can be.

In this view of the case, the question, "Whether the moral law is not the rule of a Christian's duty," appears to be perfectly idle. The moral law enjoins nothing but the love of God and the love of man, and declares to every sinner, and to every saint, how far they come short of the pure glory of God, revealed in and to be spiritually understood by it. Of course, it is purity itself, the transcript of the

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and be withered, till at length he shall be cast into the fre and be burned. John xv. 6.

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holy mind of God, and necessarily therefore holy, and just, and good. Certainly, no Christian can plead for the violation of any of the commandments; and, if not for the violation, consequently for obedience. He must love God; and he must love man, which is the sum of the moral law: he dares not justify hatred to either: his grief is, that he cannot love both, more perfectly and more entirely. With the apostle, he delights in the law of God after the inward man, and bemoans his captivity to the law of sin, which is in his members, looking out for the time, when he shall have full and everlasting deliverance from it.

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It is one thing, to confider the law as a principle of life, and quite another to look upon it as a direction for duty. In the former case, it is death and condemnation to us, all that is awful and horrible; because we are all that is vile and finful, and therefore sentenced by it to fatan and hell. We must of course utterly cast it out of our consciences and meditation, in all our approaches to God for pardon and justification. We must then consider it as nothing, or entirely done away by our Redeemer. But in the other case, the condemnation being removed by the obedience and death of Christ to every believer, there remains nothing in the law but what is pleasant and congenial to that renewed mind, which the Holy Spirit hath wrought in him. He therefore

therefore doth not love the law (more than David or the apostle) for life, or to gain life from it; but because he is alive. The law was his enemy, when he was in the death of trespasses and fins; but, in Christ, it is his friend, pleads for his falvation through the righteousness with which Christ hath magnified and made it honorable \*, and demands an everlafting reward for him in the court of heaven. It is no more the law of bondage to the Christian, but a considerable part of the law of liberty and love, which though he cannot absolutely come up to in his present state, he will conform himself to it as far as possible; because he is assured, that hereafter he shall be as perfect as this measure of perfection itself, and that it is his very happiness now to bear upon him this pourtrait of his holy Lord, and to walk in bleffed fympathy with his pure mind.

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The life of Christ, our example, was carried on in full conformity to the law; and indeed there can be no holiness, or knowledge of what holiness means, but according to a description or rule. And what rule can we find for this, but the revealed rule or mind of God? If therefore we live according to Christ, we cannot live in the allowed breach of any one of his commandments; for, if we thus live, and especially if we justify it, we surely do not

# Isaiah xlii. 21.

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follow our example, but rather infult and condemn

As Christ is the example, so his life is our life, if we are his members. I live (fays the apostle); get not I, but Christ liveth in me: and the life, which I now live in the flesh, I live by the faith of the Son of God \*. It would be strange to suppose, that the life of Christ could be a life of transgression against that law, which he came to honor and fulfil; nor can any man in his fenses, and least of all a Christian man, believe fo mad a proposition. The life of faith is given and supported by the Holy Spirit, to bring us nigh unto God in Christ, to give us access by Christ in prayer and praise, to mortify our members which are upon the earth, to subdue the whole body of fin, to obtain fresh and fresh incomes of grace and experience, to know more of the love of God, to increase more in our love to him and our neighbour, and to long more for the full fruition of our Redeemer in his kingdom, As, without faith, it is impossible to please God, or to live and act for his honor; fo every one, who has true faith, must fo act, and cannot allow himself to act otherwise. He has no liberty for a cloke of maliciousness or fin, which is only miferable bondage; but liberty for that dignified and spiritual " fervice, which is perfect

\* Gal. ii. 20.

freedom."

freedom." For this end, Christ is his apxnyos, his guide and accomplisher, who surely can only lead him in the way of God's commandments, when he hath set his heart at liberty. And therefore, the apostle thus urges upon the Philippians; because it is God who worketh in you, both to will and to do, of his good pleasure; xalepya (2006, be diligently and constantly employed upon, cultivate, go through with, your own salvation, with fear and trembling. And what is this but the life and business of holiness?

There are also subordinate examples, whom it is our duty to regard. Indeed, our duty in Christ is but another name for our privilege; for no duty is set before us, but what it is our privilege and interest to perform. The examples of patriarchs, prophets, apostles, and pastors, are to be followed, as they followed Christ; and, though they are but imperfect types or models, they are, for that reason, examples of less awe and more encouragement. Their very failings forbid us to despair, under the view of our own infirmities; while their faith and practice point out to us the road +, by which they and all the redeemed of the Lord must travel to Zion.

<sup>\*</sup> Eph. ii. 12, 13. So 1 Tim. iv. 15.

<sup>†</sup> This road is firikingly marked out in Is. xxxv. 8. And an high way, or exalting way, and a way even the way of holiness shall it be called: the unclean shall not pass upon it; but win be [God] himself will be with them, walking in the way; and even the fools shall not err therein.

He that lives under the dominion of fin, and loves it; he that can cherish it, as a sweet morsel, in his heart, or in secret; is not the servant or member of Christ, but of satan. It is true; fin is in his mortal body, and may rebel; but it doth not reign. It is fin in captivity and chains; it is fin dying, and soon to be dead; it is fin hated, and loathed, and condemned; it is fin, over which the Christian rejoices as an enemy, that shall e'er long be destroyed for ever.

On the other hand, it is both fweet and lovely to follow Christ in the regeneration, or newness of dife; and it is the special delight of all the children of God. This holy life, like a shining slame, burns with bright and fervent zeal for the truth of Jefus, and for all his gracious will and righteous ways. It cannot endure the least slight to be put upon his person, his doctrines, or his graces. It loves them all most dearly, and follows them all most nearly. Any distance is grievous, any doubt distressing. If there were no hell, the inward man of a Christian would make no abatement in the love of holiness or hate of fin. If there were no heaven; yet it would be fomething like it in his apprehension, to walk foberly, righteously, and godly in this present world, and far better than all the joys of those, who serve the world, the flesh, and the devil.

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Christian; I appeal to thy heart and experience,

if it be not fo. Thou art an evidence of this noble truth, and a witness for me in declaring it. I am fure, thou haft never had greater pleasure, than when thou hast been able to work most diligently, or to feel most zealously, for thy Master. His service is such a reasonable one, as not only to be right in itfelf, but to afford unspeakable satisfaction in the very doing it. The performance is crowned with payment all the way through. It is a fervice, which makes the tenor of life chearful, and encourages the foul to look upon the approach of death as only "Eternity's birth-day." From the prospect and assurance of life eternal, the heart of a Christian is borne up against all enemies and adversities, and can count them all but as light affliction, lasting for a moment, and ushering in, as well as making more welcome, the exceeding and eternal weight of glory.

"But, say some, may not this supposed assurance induce carelessness of mind and of life?—Let the answer be in the words of Abp. Leighton, whose learning, judgement, and piety, were of no common form.—" 'Tis a soolish misgrounded fear, and such as argues inexperience of the nature and workings of divine grace, to imagine that the assured hope of salvation will beget unholiness and presumptuous boldness in sin, and therefore that the doctrine of that assurance is a doctrine of licentiousness. Our iposse (Peter) we see, is not so sharp-sighted as these

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these men think themselves: he apprehends no such matter, but indeed supposes the contrary as unquestionable: he takes not assured hope and holiness as enemies, but joins them as nearest friends;—hope perfectly—and—be holy \*."

It is incumbent, then, upon all professors of religion to make full proof of their vocation by their actions among men. Let them see their good works, that they may glorify God in the day of visitation. Let genuine faith appear in its genuine fruits. Let Christians live so, as to live down every lie and slander, which an ungodly world would gladly raise upon them; and let them commit their souls in well-doing to him that judgeth righteously, and shew themselves to be God's peculiar people, whom he hath purified unto himself, by their being constantly zealous of Good works.

\* Com. on Peter. c. i. v. 14.

## HIDDEN, OR SECRET ONES.

THE people of God are called by this name; partly because they are hidden in his counsels of grace from common knowledge, and therefore unknown to the world; and partly because of that hidden life, which he hath planted in their souls, and, which like the new name, written upon the white stone \*, cannot be positively understood but by him that receiveth it.

In the first view, as known unto God are all his works from the beginning of the world; so certainly the works, or workmanship, of his new creation were ever perfectly in his fight, and the people of his love, who are the objects of this creation, were foreknown by him according to his own purpose and grace, which was given them in Christ Jesus, before the world began +. Hence Christ is represented by the psalmist as saying to Jehovah; Thine eyes did see my substance yet being imperfect, and in thy book [God's order and appointment] all my members were written [all that compose this substance] which

\* Rev. ii. 17. † 2 Tim. i. 9.

† """, my chaötic mass, to human view; confused, like the parts of a building not set up, or the world itself before its complete arrangement.

in continuance were fashioned [or, as in the margin, what days they should be fashioned] when as yet there was none of them. How precious then are thy friends (or beloved ones) to me! How mighty are the chief of them \*!

This holy number (perfect in itself as a mathematical fquare, and therefore so formed or described in the Revelation +, yet utterly innumerable by the arithmetic of man) is written, or arranged in order as writings usually are, and composed of Gentiles afar off, as well as the nearer Jews. Hence, by an allusion peculiar to the facred tongue, these Gentiles, as part of the city of God, are called the north, or the sides of the north; not only because the typical Jerufalem stood for the most part on the north fide of the temple, but rather perhaps because the great flow of the Gentiles should be from the north to the church of Christ, or because the state of these Gentiles, when the prophecies were given, was that of darkness, remoteness, or hiddenness, as the north is from the fun; and therefore the word, which fignifies both this and the north, was used to describe that state; dark and distant from the Sun of righteoulnels. Such allusions are very frequent in scripture; and the fact, in this case, seems to justify the

application

<sup>\*</sup> Pf. cxxxix. 16, 17. Thus the Hebrew of ver. 17. should have been rendered; and thus nearly it is rendered by the lxx. † Rev. xxi. 16.

application of the name. Thus the church is called, in the same verse, the joy of the whole earth, Mount Zion, the sides [or extreme parts] of the north, and the city of the great King \*. This was to give an idea of the whole church, Jews and Gentiles, known and unknown, in being and to be. Under the fame idea, the prophet Jeremiah was taught to speak of the last dispensation, upon the coming of Christ, that God's people, whether of the house of Judah or the Jews in particular, or of the house of Israel or the redeeemed at large, should walk together (having but one faith) and should come together (as to one object) and out of the land of the north (the land of darkness and hiddenness, ארץ צפה ( to the land given to them and the fathers, as one common and perpetual inheritance +. For this reason probably, the camp of Dan, who prefigured the Gentiles, and who as fuch was to judge his people As one of the tribes of Ifrael, that is, was to have the same truth and falvation among them as the rest of the Israel of God; was appointed, in allusion to the dark and remote state of the Gentiles, or to the fecret counsels of God concerning them, on the north-fide of the whole camp of the people, and, in their progression, was to be the rereward of all the camps throughout their hosts, bringing up the remnant of the church

<sup>\*</sup> Pf. xlviii. 2. See also Isa. xiv. 13.

<sup>†</sup> Jer. iii. 18. See also xxiii. 8.

of God, after Christ should have appeared in the sless. Hence, to the Jews, Dan was indeed, as a serpent by the way, secretly yet vehemently making his course, and biting the horse-heels, overthrowing the agency of the Jewish ecconomy; so that his rider, the Jewish nation, fell backward\*. The prospect of this event, which was to take place after the coming of Shiloh, who was to bring in the mercy to all people, and to whom their gathering should be, caused the patriarch Jacob to exclaim, I have waited for thy salvation, O Lord!

All this, taken together, may ferve to fhew, both in doctrine and example, that the people of God are and ever have been a people hidden in his counfels, and brought forth from age to age according to his gracious will and fecret appointment.

In another view, looking from their special defignation as heirs of promise to their peculiar experience as partakers of the grace of life, the children of God are hidden and unknown by the world. Their life is a hidden one—hid with Christ in God: and the world knoweth not them, because it knoweth not him.

Christ is their head, and as such the author and sountain of this hidden and spiritual life. They live upon him for it and in it. They have nothing of

their own, but fin; and upon fin they cannot live, but oppose and abhor it. In order to conquer this corrupt and inbred life, which they derive from their fallen nature, they draw out of the fulness of their Redeemer grace for grace; and by this mean, and only by this, they grow in the life of grace, and therefore are said, because their Redeemer is divine, to increase with all the increase of God. They are of God, according to his own will, in Christ Jesus, who from the Godhead (and Dee) is made unto them wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption: and thus they are enabled to obey what is written, He that glorieth, let him glory in the Lord; for, in themselves, they find, that they have neither right, nor pretence, to glory at all.

When the fun is low or oblique, the shadow of a man is long and evident, perhaps an hundred fold longer than his real substance, till at length it is swallowed up in darkness; but when its rays are sufficiently substantially s

whom the Lord approves, and hath united to himself by the strongest inward faith, humility, and love. His choicest secret ones are not only lowest in their own eyes, but perhaps in the eyes of their professing brethren. They may probably shine out at the last from such obscurity of talents and obscurity of place and condition, as may assonish every beholder, and lead him to admire that order of God, who makes small things great, and sets what man thought to be last in the uppermost seat before him.

This hidden man of the heart, or, as the pfalmist calls it, this hidden thing or part \*, is the new man, which is not corruptible, because it is renewed after the image of him that created him. And this new or hidden man is sustained by new and secret food, even by the hidden manna, the life and grace of Christ, communicated by his Spirit. By this it is replenished, and proceeds to the measure of the stature appointed.

As this is a true and invincible life in its effence, fo, like the natural life, it appears to have its own peculiar effects and operations. It is capable of spiritual and divine knowledge, of which the natural man, however ingenious or learned in natural things, is truly incapable. He of himself cannot taste, experience, or exercise, this gracious wisdom; and therefore, if he could imbibe a thousand spe-

culations upon divine ideas cloathed with hu nan words, he cannot attain to the principle and life of this heavenly thing; not more than a person who beholds the picture of a feast can be said to enjoy one. He may look, and contemplate, and starve. This wisdom is, therefore, called the hidden wisdom. which the princes or the great of this world, that is, those who are high in themselves, cannot know; because God is said to reveal its truths by his Spirit, and to him only that is spiritual\*, who as such is alone prepared for their reception. And it is also called the fecret (no, the fundamental or established counfel) of the Lord, which is with them that fear him, and with them only. By this wisdom, the believer is taught where to find strength for every occasion, pardon for every fin, justification for every demand of the law, holiness against every pollution, victory over death and hell, and life and peace for evermore. He prays in fecret to him that feeth in fecret; or, what is the fame in other words, he entereth in spirit into the fecret place of the Most High, and dwelleth under the shadow of the Almighty. He casts anchor within the vail, and finds it fure and stedfast in every ftorm. He lives by the faith of the Son of God, and looks to him as his refuge in every time of need; nor is he, nor shall he ever be, disappointed of his hope.

\* 1 Cor. ii. 10, &c.

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What a mystery is this life of the Christian to a man of the world? He cannot conceive, how it is possible for any one to love God, whom he hath not feen; or to act dependent upon him in a renunciation of himself; or to live in a serious retirement and obscurity among men, undefirous of, or rather dreading, earthly pomp and worldly glory; or to tafte of fuch superior joys and comforts, as can render infipid all the delights, and pleafures, and entertainments, round about him. This is a strange life and business to the natural man; and because he wants a name for it, he gives it a hard one, though wide enough from the right, through his ignorance and inexperience. He therefore hates or despifes the Christian, who feels, or ought to feel, in return, none but the kindest emotions of pity for him.

May I enjoy, for my part, this fecret and facred love of my God within my foul; for furely nothing befide can make me happy. I have tried, and others have tried, all possible schemes of pleasure, which the world can afford, or sense can receive; but, alas! what are all earthly things but sleeting vanity; or, what fruit can they produce at the last, but keen remorse, and pungent, gloomy, wearisome, vexation of spirit? Thy secret wisdom, O my God, conveyed to my heart through thy word, hath greatly delivered me from this doleful path, and guided my feet into the way of peace. True; it is but a

narrow

narrow way; and few there be that find it; but the way, however, is thine, and infallibly leads up unto thee. O make me to learn this pure wisdom secretly; and then shall I walk in thy truth to the end, and no wickedness shall have dominion over me!

## STRANGERS AND PILGRIMS.

THE Holy Ghost employs every kind of similitude, apparent in the objects of nature, to represent the state and the privileges of the children of God. And as a similitude, in some respect or other, really exists between natural and spiritual things; he teaches us, by this example of his own wisdom, to be constantly engaging our thoughts, while we are occupied among earthly matters, upon the sublime and delightful subjects of an everlasting world.

The children of Adam are all ftrangers upon earth in one relation or another. As they came into the world, and while they continue in their natural state, they are children of wrath, strangers \* from

<sup>\*</sup> The Old Testament has three words, which are translated stranger or foreigner, but which in the original have a peculiar or more forcible sense; as may be seen particularly

the covenants of promife, alienated from the life of God, having no hope, and mere Atheists in the world. But those, who are reconciled and brought nigh by the blood of Christ, are indeed no longer strangers to God; and yet they must be strangers still, under a new capacity, to the world and their former condition in it. When the Lord paffes over them, beholding their consciences sprinkled with the blood of Jesus, who is the only means of that pasfing over without vengeance, and therefore called the passover itself in the abstract; they are enabled to go forth with power out of the spiritual Egypt, and the bondage of fin, and to become estranged to that tyrant and tyranny, under which they had been Through the effectual working of the Spirit of grace, they become mortified in their affections to the former lusts, which ruled in them in the time of their ignorance and estrangement from God, grow more and more dead to felf with all its false ambition and groveling views, are at a distance from the

particularly in Exod. xii. 43, &c. The word no, in ver. 43. means a person, not only a Gentile, but in the worst sense, a stranger and an alien to God and his people. In ver. 43. the word num, rendered foreigner, implies a sojourning stranger, one who lives among God's people, but is not of them. And in ver. 48, 49. The word no, also rendered stranger, denotes one moved with sear, and so walking, in a spiritual sense, as a proselyte of the truth, convinced of his need of an interest in the covenant of grace, and privileged to come into it.

life

life and spirit of the world, and tremble to follow its maxims or to mix with its pursuits. They are taught, and not only taught but induced, to look upon earth, as a firange place, where every object presents a danger, and almost every step a snare; as a region, now far from the Sun of righteousness, where their spiritual nature is exposed to storms, and their new life to deadening cold; in short, as a howling wilderness, where no spiritual bread grows for their fouls, but must daily descend from their own country above, and where every kind of enemy and every species of barrenness, want, or emptiness, must continually be found. Like Ifrael of old, they wander in the wilderness in a solitary way, and find no city to dwell in. God is their guide through this defert world, they not knowing truly a step of their way without him, but following him in faith whither foever he goeth. They depend upon him to lead them forth by the right way, that they may go to the city of habitation. The road is intricate; but their conductor is fure. Thus the redeemed of the Lord are strangers in a strange land, and are treated accordingly. Walking in the spirit of their master, the world perceives the alienation, will at least ridicule, and, if permitted, will commonly perfecute them for it. Neither the innocency nor the usefulness of their lives shall screen them from censure and malignity; but all evil things shall be said of them,

them, which can at any rate be believed, and fome which no belief, aided by the keenest prejudices, can possibly swallow. Witness the charge made upon the primitive Christians (as Tertullian, who lived within 200 years of Christ, relates it) of murder and adultery, of killing and eating an infant in their nocturnal affemblies, and of contriving to put out the candles in a minute, in order as a fignal and an occasion to commit all manner of impurities. Witness almost the same things retailed again and again, without proof, without fense, and beyond the very conscience, as it must be owned, of the relaters themselves, even down to the most modern times. And yet, after all, the malice of the world is not abated in itself, though the power of exerting it (bleffed be God) is curtailed; for indeed the antipathy of its spirit to the Spirit which is of God, is so radical and fo entire, as to be abfolutely irreconcileable in themselves. For which reason doubtless it was, that our Lord and his apostle gave forth that standing admonition to the church; marvel not if the world hate you \*: if ye were of the world, the world would love his own; but because ye are not of the world, but I have chosen you out of the world, therefore the world hateth you +.

· Now, as the Christian is and must be a stranger

<sup>\* 1</sup> John, iii. 13.

upon earth, averse to its maxims and life, and it averse to his; it is expedient for him to be a pilgrim, that is, a passenger, from the earth to a better country, even the heavenly. He must be a spiritual Hebrew, which means the fame thing, and must relinquish his own country (like Abraham) and his father's house, that is, this present evil world, and the old Adam of nature in which he was born. these he must pass over the flood, as the river and the Red sea were passed over of old, or like another Rubicon with a decided purpose, and make the best of his way, under the divine guidance and protection, to the promifed land. He cannot fix his thoughts here; for this is not his rest, because it is polluted. Thus he becomes a fojourner, as all the fathers, all the faithful, ever were\*. He is engaged in a pilgrimage, and must proceed; for destruction is behind him, and before him an eternal weight of glory. To go backward is horror; to stand still is misery; to fall short is despair. He is, therefore, in earnest upon this most awful, this most necessary, business: nor would he be wrong for a thousand worlds. And confequently, knowing his own weaknefs, as well as his own wickedness, he is importunate in prayer, watchful in spirit, tender in his heart, humble in his life, and looking (but bewailing that he looketh not enough) to Jesus, that he may be kept by the power

<sup>\* 1</sup> Chron. xxix. 15. Pf. xxxix. 12.

of God through faith unto falvation. He walks in the way of providence for this world, and in the way of grace for another: and God is his guide in both, according to that sweet promise; an highway shall be there, and a way [a certain and prepared way] and it shall be called the way of holiness; the unclean shall not pass over it, but it shall be for those: the way-faring men, though fools, shall not err therein; or, as the latter part might be rendered, but HE himself [km, God] shall be with them, walking in the way, and even the fools shall not err therein\*

In thus being strangers, and pilgrims, and Hebrews, they are also, truly and spiritually, the only Jews, that is, the confessors and glorifiers of Jehovah. He is not a Jew (fays the apostle) who is one outwordly; neither is that circumcifion, which is outward in the flesh: but he is a few, who is one inwardly; and circumcision is that of the heart; in the spirit, and not in the letter, whose praise is not of men, but of God. Three things made a Jew in the flesh, who is but a shadow of the Jew in the spirit, namely, Is circumcision: 2. baptism: 3. sacrifice. And the purport of these constitute a Christian, who is the true and living Jew; 1. circumcifion of the heart, or cutting off the old man with his deeds, fo as not to live by him as the principle of life towards God. 2. The baptism or regeneration of the Spirit, which

<sup>•</sup> Ifa. xxxv. 8.

is putting on the new man, even Christ Jesus, as the substance of spiritual life. 3. The sacrifice of the whole body, foul, and spirit to the will of Jehovah through Christ Jesus. Where this hath taken place, the foul is brought into communion with God as a friend and a child, is enabled to crucify the flesh with its affections and lusts, is rendered a stranger and pilgrim upon earth, is brought into the bond of the everlasting covenant in perception and experience, and hath a right and title through Christ to all the promifes, mercies, bleffings, and truths, revealed in the gospel. This gospel is the common charter and deed of conveyance to the heirs of falvation, who are privileged now to cry, without a falsehood, Abba, Father; and, as children, to put in their claim to all that is purchased and all that is prepared for them. They are but of one nation under the same king, one chosen generation under the same head, one family under the fame Father; all dear to him, and by him provided for and protected continually. O what a transcendent glory is put upon poor worms, when redeemed from the earth, and made kings and priests unto God and the Father for evermore! What honourable thoughts should the Christian have of his own renewed state and condition! How clear should he strive to keep it from all impeachment and degradation! How full of praise should he be to Father, Son, and Spirit, the one Jehovah,

Jehovah, who hath done fo much for him, and will yet do more, in time and in eternity!

O my God, when I think upon these things, often doth my heart melt within me, and my foul is ready to cry out; Who, and what am I, that thou haft brought me hitherto! What, but love divine, could have taken me from the base and vile condition of a stranger to God, of a rebel, a slave, a traitor against him, and have raifed me, not only to the honourable degree of a fervant, which would have been an honour that the first of angels rejoices to receive and infinitely beyond my expectations, but to the affectionate relation of a friend and a fon, and that fon an heir, even an heir of God and a joint-heir with Christ Jesus of an exceeding and eternal weight of glory? O what hath God done for my poor unworthy foul! How hath he made me to rejoice in the earnest and affurance of it! Let, O let this kindle in my heart the warmest slame of affection and gratitude; and let me learn more and more to become a stranger to all but thee, my God, and what belongs to thy truth and falvation. Let me daily feel and remember, that I am but a pilgrim, a paffenger, a sojourner here; and consequently let the staff be always in my hand, my loins girt, and my lamp burning; ever waiting, in meek and patient expectation, for the coming or calling of my Lord Redeemer. Thus may I stand oft upon my watch-

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tower, eagerly looking for the Aijaleth Shahar, the hind of the morning \*, the appearance of the Sun of righteousness to bless me in his kingdom. I am but a poor traveller, weak and fore beset within and without: Lord, help me! Strengthen me for my journey, and quicken my pace in it, that I may not be slow of heart to believe, nor dull in spirit to follow thee, in the ways of thy salvation!

## CHOSEN GENERATION.

WE have confidered the purport of the word chosen, as it relates to the people of God; and, therefore, in this place, it may be proper to treat more especially of the word GENERATION.

Generation hath various fenses in the holy scriptures. But its primary and leading sense, and its sense particularly in this title, seems to be a nation, a race, or family, derived from one stock, or progenitor. The original word is taken from a root, which signifies to form as well as to bring forth; and the sigure, applied to the children of God, declares, that they are begotten again unto a lively hope; of God's own will with the word of truth;

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<sup>\*</sup> Pf. xxii. Title. + 1 Pet. i. 3. # James i. 18.

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and so are born again of the Spirit of God\*, not of corruptible feed, but of incorruptible, by the word of God who liveth and abideth for ever +. They were once of the generation of the world, and a feed of evil doers; but now, in Christ, they are chosen from that corrupt stock and generation, and brought into a new stock, even the generation of God's children ‡.

Because of this new state into which the redeemed are brought, and because of this new nature, even the divine nature, of which they partake §; all of which is by the wonderful operation and mere grace of God; the words new creation, regeneration, first refurrection, adoption, &c. are used to point out both that express and free agency of the Most High, and also the privileges which they rightly obtain by being thus truly and spiritually his new-born children. These words, employed by God, are not mere words of flourish and ornament, such as we see in the writings of men; but really denote that extraordinary alteration, which every real Christian feels within himself upon his conversion, and which, by the very terms of it, can be attributed to no less a power than that of God. For, as it would be monstrous to common sense to say, that a person created or produced

<sup>\*</sup> John iii. 5. ‡ Pf. lxxiii. 15. § 2 Pet. i. 4. Heb. iii. 14. vi. 4. himfelf.

himself, and formed all the faculties of human nature within him; so is it no less absurd, in the spiritual view, to affirm, that any believer raised himself from the death of sins, or could be raised by the mere talking of another creature like himself, or without the immediate intervention of the Lord. Perhaps, it is more absurd to affirm this than the other, because the production or renovation of matter is evidently of less consequence and more gross than the production or change of a spirit from an almost diabolic and miserable state to a divine and happy being. Christ, with a word, could raise a dead body to life; but he was constrained to die and rise again, in order to quicken the spiritually dead and to raise them up to newness of life.

All this generation proceeds in Christ, through the love of the Father, and by the power of the Holy Spirit\*. Thus the cxth Psalm speaks of it

<sup>\*</sup> To this purpose speaks very excellently the judicious Hooker. "That which moveth God to work is goodness, and that which ordereth his work is wisdom, and that which perfecteth his work is power. All things which God, in their times and seasons, hath brought forth, were eternally and before all times in God; as a work unbegun is in the artificer, which asterward bringeth it unto effect. Therefore whatsoever we do behold now in this present world, it was enwrapped within the bowels of divine mercy, written in the book of eternal wisdom, and held in the hands of omnipotent power, the first foundations of the world being as yet unlaid. So that all things which God hath

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as a matter of divine counsel, and a particular revelation of it from JEHOVAH to the ADONAL Mejsiah: Sit thou at my right hand, that is, possess my almighty power, till thine enemies, Satan, fin, and death, be subdued. JEHOVAH shall send the rod of thy strength, thy commissioned power as the King and High Priest of thy people, out of Zion: rule thou in the midst of thine enemies. Thy people shall be willing [next, free-willingness itself] in the day of thy power, in the beauties of holiness. From the womb of the morning, thou hast the dew of thy youth; or, " more than the dew from the womb of the morning is the dew of thy progeny." This generation shall be numerous as the drops of dew in the morning, fhining with resplendent holiness, when the Sun of righteousness shall arise upon them in the appointed day of his power. Hence these children of the refurrection \* are faid to be a great multitude,

made are in that respect the offspring of God: they are in him as effects in their highest cause; he likewise is actually in them, the affistance and influence of the Deity being their life. Let hereunto saving Efficacy be added, and it bringeth forth a special offspring among men, containing them to whom God hath himself given the gracious and amiable name of sons. Eccl. Polit. B. v.

\* Luke xx. 36. They are children of the refurrection, because of their special appointment to life eternal, and therefore they can die no more, as our Lord declares. This is a common phrase among the Hebrews to denote a particular condition or allotment; thus, children of Belial.

which no man could number; though, compared to the world at large out of which they are taken, they are called a little flock and a small remnant.

As this generation is from Christ, they are renewed in knowledge after the image of him that created them. There is not only an alteration in their circumstances, but a change in their life. As they are new-born and brought into a new and holy family, they have the spirit and likeness of the family: and this is one of their testimonies, that they really belong to it. It is not possible to believe, that a creature, deformed with all the ugliness of fin, wallowing with the fwine of this world in impurity, and affociating with the enemies of God's houshold, can at any rate be a child of God. There are no fuch monfrous births as these from the Holy Spirit. Our Lord fays of fuch, Ye are of your father the devil, and his works ye will do. As by their fruits, we can differn the children of God from the children of Belial; fo the generation of God's children being made free from sin, and from its prevailing power, as one of their greatest mercies and privileges \*,

Belial, children of wrath, children of death, children of this world, the child of a house, &c. signified their devoted state of life or mind. So the learned Constantine L'Empereur observes, Filius hujus wel illius rei apud Hebræos dicitur, qui specialem quandam ad rem istam habet relationem; adeo ut licet aliis etiam competat, sibi speciali et proprio respectu conveniat. De leg. Hebr. c. iv. 16.

\* Rom. vi. 14.

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they have their fruit unto boliness, and the end everlasting life. They are redeemed from fin, and therefore, in the strength of their Lord, they fight against it and prevail. This is the feal of the Spirit and the fruit of the Spirit: and this inward feal, and outward fruit, are the proofs to them, that indeed they are partakers of the grace of life, and that the never-ending kingdom of God is fet up in their hearts. But, if professors can produce nothing of this kind in the court of their own consciences, or in the view of the world; let them not deceive themselves with the thought of belonging to God's chosen generation, but strictly examine and prove their own selves, as in the presence of God, whether Christ be in them or not, or whether the prophet's words may not be fulfilled in each of them, He feedeth on ashes; a deceived heart bath turned him afide, that he cannot deliver his foul, nor fay, Is there not a lie in my right-hand \*? They, that are born of God, have the proper life of their Father in them; and that life, being a life of power and holinefs, will most certainly discover itself in those actions which are peculiar to it.

We do not contend, in these important subjects, for mere notions and opinions, for the shadows of speculation or abstract theories, but for real, living,

<sup>\*</sup> Ifa. xliv. 20.

and fubstantial truth, which we have not only heard and feen and looked upon with a spiritual ear and eye, but which we have handled, and tasted, and enjoyed, by a heart-felt and consirmed experience. And therefore we can humbly, yet chearfully and considently, say with the apostle, we know that the Son of God is come, and hath given us an understanding, that we may know him that is true; and we are in him that is true, even in his Son Jesus Christ; and that this, this Christ, is the true God, and eternal life to our fouls.

We know likewise, that we are of this generation, because of the opposition, which the other generation is ever making both to us and to this great truth of our regeneration in Christ, which they hate, scoff at, and deny. They are of the world, and therefore the world heareth them, approve the their sayings, applaudeth their spirit, and joineth with them in their opposition to the great principles and experiences of the gospel. If we were of the world, the world would love its own; but nothing fills it with so much bitterness and enmity against us, that we should be chosen out of the world, though God himself hath expressly declared it.

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"But doth not this election lead to looseness, or at least carelessness, of life?"—But how can this be, when we know not our election, and have no proof of it to comfort us, but by the very contrary effect

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in our hearts and lives? Let it be remembered, that we do not begin with God, nor proceed with God, no, nor rest ourselves upon God, merely as his elect children; but as his called, renewed, and sanctified children; from whence we gather, to our unspeakable comfort and to our enlivening diligence, that therefore we are chosen in Christ, that God hath loved us with an everlasting love, and that, as his gifts and callings are without repentance, our saith, hope, and labor of love, shall not be in vain in the Lord.

So far is our vocation in Christ from leading us into fin, that, immediately upon it, but never in reality before, we commence a warfare against the very being, as well as exercise, of evil, as it exists in the world, the flesh, and the devil. This warfare continues without a truce; for every remission or parley is attended with danger. We do not indeed go to the war in our own ftrength or at our own charge, then we fhould foon be loft. But we do as the Ifraelites did: we fight, not with horses, or chariots, or depend upon foreign or human alliances (for those people were directed to avoid an these, and did avoid them in their best times) but with the arm of the living God, whose strength is made perfect in our weakness, and who gives the victory to faith, which relies upon him, and commits the whole warfare to his care and management. But war we must, notwithstanding & withstanding: we are expressly and indispensably called to it. And, for our comfort, we may be assured, that the hostility of these soes against the soul, is, among other proofs, a sure token of its union with Christ; and the victory over them another corroborating testimony of its eternal redemption by him. The strong one armed keepeth his house and his goods in peace, till one stronger than all overcome and bind him, and despoil him of his plunder and abode.

Without " the godly confideration" of our election in Christ, it seems hardly possible to maintain that divine plerophory, or full affurance, of faith, and hope, and understanding to the end, which is held forth as the privilege of the children of God. For how can any rejoice truly in an uncertain event? And how can any event be certain, unless it be ordered and fure, according to those divine counsels and that covenant, which foresee and foreordain all circumstances, beyond defeat or disappointment? It is the certitude of faith concerning a most certain falvation, which leads the heart to victory over difficulties and enemies, and which fooner or later crowns it with joy unspeakable and full of glory. They, therefore, who doubt of their election, may possibly be within the bond of the covenant; but most evidently cannot enjoy it, while they continue in doubting. And this doubting, and the want of

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comfort which follows it, are certainly not to be ranked among the privileges of believers; nor have they any tendency to strengthen hand or heart in the service and glory of God.

It is a striking passage in the fong of blessed Hannah: My heart rejoiceth in the Lord; mine horn is exalted in the LORD; my mouth is enlarged over mine enemies; BECAUSE I rejoice in thy falvation. Her joy in the Lord enabled her to triumph over her enemies. Confidence and rejoicing in Christ do not lead men to fin, but to conquest over it. 'Tis doubt, which brings darkness, and darkness deadness, and deadness subjection to fin, and this Subjection ruin. If Fehoshaphat had doubted of the promife, he had never rejoiced over his enemies; but he believed and fang praises even before the victory, from the certainty of that event: and his faith was crowned with an inconceivable fuccess \*. The faithfulness and omnipotence of JEHOVAH were engaged in his behalf: and against him, who can refift or prevail?

of thy chosen clear in my fight, and warm on my heart, as long as I live; that I too, unworthy as I am in myself, may give thanks with thine inheritance, for all this unutterable mercy, this inestimably

\* 2 Chron. xx.

precious falvation! O let this joy of the Lord be my strength in this house of my pilgrimage, that I may go forth to my warfare undifmayed, unwearied, and unfubdued. My flesh, and the false and foolish wifdom of the flesh, in conjunction with my other enemies, fight against the truth and reality of thy fovereign and diftinguishing mercy, and would fain be finding motives subordinate, if not contrary, to thine, in all thy method of redemption. It would lead me to my vile felf, and to creatures, to the low and deceitful workings of a fallen heart, instead of to thee and thy pure will and word. Lord, keep me from a delufion, which can only entail upon me doubt and gloom, and all the miseries which must attend an uncertain relation to thee. Rather, let me contemplate, what thou hast done for me by Christ, and in me by thy Spirit, and what thou hast promifed yet to do, according to that love and faithfulness which are from everlasting to everlasting, uncircumfcribed by all the narrow thoughts and limits of thy most exalted creatures. In this blessed hope, this joyful communion of thy grace, let me live and honor thee, and ardently feek to honor thee more and more, in whatever so mean a being can perform through thy ftrength working in me. And when all that is to be done in me or by me, in this my day and generation upon earth, is performed;

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O remove me, according to thy holy promife, to the fathers gone before me, to the general affembly of the first-born who are written in heaven, to the fpirits of the just made perfect, and (to crown all) to Jesus the mediator of the new covenant, with whom I shall abide, and to whom I shall be made like for ever and ever! O wonderful manifestation of eternal love! O glorious mystery delightfully unfolded! O what can I fay, now on earth, or hereafter in heaven, but in the spirit if not the words of that charming fong; Bless the LORD, O my soul; and all that is within me, bless his holy name. Bless the LORD, all his hasts; ye ministers of his that do his pleasure. Bless the LORD, all his works in all places of his dominion: blefs the LORD, O my foul! Hallelu- JAH! Amen.

## ROYAL PRIESTHOOD.

This title, which is given to the people of God, in 1 Pet. ii. 9\*. is of the same import with that in Exod. xix. 6. a kingdom of priests, and with another in Rev. i. 6. kings and priests. They are words used to express the power and dignity, with the grace and holiness, conferred upon the children of God.

No man can make himself a king, without being ausurper; nor can any ordain himself a priest, without
authority. These are offices, which none can take
to themselves, save they who are called of God; as
were Saul and David, for the kingdom; and, for
the priesthood, Aaron. Those, who intrude themselves into these stations without a proper vocation,
are too commonly puffed up by their own fleshly mind,
and come to nothing.

\* "The fense is, as though the Lord had said, Ye shall be to me a people, in whom I will constitute a kingdom and priesthood; or, as the Chaldee paraphrast expounds it, To me ye shall be kings and priests. For all these in a certain manner, by conjunction of soul, are kings in the one King [Christ], and all are priests in him the one great High-priest. Whence, there is no impropriety in saying, that all the people offered sacrifice [as it is said of Solomon and the Israelites in Kings viii. 62, 63.] though the priest only actually performed it." Estius in Exod. xix. 6.

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These king-priests, therefore, are appointed of God to participate a kingdom which cannot be shaken, and for this purpose (according to the outward sign) are spiritually anointed by him, which is the token and qualification of their calling and station. None are truly his spiritual priests, but those who have the unction of the Holy One, and are taught of God: and this is never put upon man's sless, or corrupt nature, nor yet upon a stranger to the grace and covenant of God. Exod. xxx. 32, 33.

They are called kings, because they have a royal will and fublime spirit imparted to them, by which they are enabled to look down upon the mean and beggarly spirit of this world, occupied in trash and fin, and to look up, with dignity and delight, to that wisdom and glory and all its fruitful and happy effects, which the KING of kings hath appointed for them. They have also a power to reign in righteoutness over evil, and the authors of evil; imperfeely here, because of a corrupt body which they bear about them, but perfectly in the life to come, when they shall be absolutely holy and victorious for ever. Their dominion shall be extensive, how extensive we cannot conceive through the medium of our frail and feeble fense; and of its duration there Their very crown is a crown of shall be no end. glory and of righteousness, and, like their inheritance and kingdom, incorruptible, undefiled, and unfading.

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They are named priests, because of their facred and unalterable character, and because of the privilege, by which they intimately and nearly approach the HIGHEST\*, and offer up spiritual facrifices and services before him. They are clothed with the bright and spotless robes of righteousness and salvation, which shine upon them with glory and beauty. Their holy anointing teacheth them wonderful things of Jehovah's wisdom and truth; and they are led on from knowing and seeing only in part, through the heavy impressions of a sallen animal nature, to a blissful state, where they shall know even as also they are known.

The word priest, being only a contraction of preoster as that is of presbyter, signifies strictly an elder, one who is wise and established in the things of God, and therefore able to guide and instruct others. In this sense, all God's people are and shall be made spiritually wise and learned in his holy ways, silled with apprehensions of his sublime glory, and led on to more and more perfect investigations of his eternal and infinite truth, with increase of capacity and

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<sup>\*</sup> This high privilege of their spiritual character was prefigured by the legal priests, as it appears from Exod. xix. 22, and Lev. x. 3, and consirmed by Heb. x. 19, Rom. v. 2. Eph. iii. 12. The word only signifies priest, but prince, in high authority. Such was Potipherab, Joseph's father-in-law; and such were David's sons, in 2 Sam. viii. 18.

without end of being. Jacob loved Joseph, not merely because he was the son of his old age, as our translation renders the clause; but because he was the son of the elders himself to him, that is, wise, and wise in spiritual things, as the elders : so their heavenly father, having surnished their minds with wisdom from above, loves his children in the gift and for the gift, which he himself hath bestowed upon them.

As priests to God and the Father, or of God and of Christ, they are also the true Aaronites. The name is taken from a root, which signifies to proclaim, to praise, to cry out for joy. They exalt the Lord, and bless his holy name: And, like the morning stars, they shall lift up their voices for ever, and sing together and shout for joy, ascribing glory, and honour, and blessing, to God and the Lamb their Redeemer.

They are likewise the true and spiritual Levites. The word Levi (as we shall observe hereafter) signifies joined; and the tribe, who bare that name, were joined to Aaron + as his brethren, and were given to him for the service of holy things ‡: so the redeemed are joined to the Lord § the great high priest of their profession, in one Spirit, and were given to him || of the Father, that they might be holy and without blame

<sup>\*</sup> Gen. xxxvii. 3.

<sup>‡</sup> Numb. iii. 9.

<sup>|</sup> John vi. 37.

<sup>†</sup> Numb. xviii. 2.

<sup>§ 1</sup> Cor. vi. 17.

before him in love, and serve him in righteousness and true holiness for ever.

They are not confined to any particular stock or nation, as of old; but the Gentile believers are equally brethren with the Jews, equally come to the holy mountain the spiritual ferusalem, are alike a sacred offering in a clean vessel, and taken for priests and levites unto Jehovah\*. Thus all the ends of the earth are brought nigh unto God: Thus all the earth, the whole world, that is, Gentiles as well as Jews, having faith in the Redeemer, are made his own; and to these, to the whole of these, whatever be their nation or tongue, he is named, though in himself fehowah Sabaoth, their Husband, their Redeemer, their Holy One, their Alehim, and their Adon †.

\* Ifa. lxvi. 20, 21. and lxi. 6.

† Isa. liv. 5. Mic. iv. 13. 1 John ii. 1, 2. Some, contrary to the general sense and analogy of faith, which run through the whole scriptures, have ventured to assert an universal redemption from this 1 John ii. 1, 2. If any man sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous; and he is the propitiation for our sins, and not for our sins only, but also for the sins of the whole world.

In the first place; the word ris should not have been translated every man, but every one; i. e. of those to whom and for whom the apostle writes, who have the word of God in them, who walk in the light, who have fellowship with the Father and with Christ, and whom therefore the apostle calls, my little, or dear, children, because of such he was the means of conversion. These are the persons, whom he places with himself, when he says, that Christ is the propitiation for OUR sins.

Next:

All these, in the aggregate, are a royal priesthood in their relation to Christ, a kingdom of priests under

Next; The word world hath various acceptations in scripture; sometimes meaning, the whole universe, or creation, of God; fometimes, the world we live upon; foemtimes, the whole people who live on this earth; fometimes, the evil people in distinction from God's people; fometimes, God's people only for whom the world frands; fometimes, a dispensation of God existing in the world, and especially in the time of the Jews, who diffinguished, the present world (their then flate under the law of Moses) from the world to come (as Heb. ii. 5.) or the dispensation under the Messiah. force of the chief fenses of the word world in the Bible; to which we may add those very intelligible diffinctions in the usage of the term among men, as the great, the political, the commercial, the wicked, or the religious, world.

But, as the CHURCH upon earth is the real and important part of the world in God's eye, it is often called, and especially in the prophetic writings, by the names earth, or land, or world, itself; metonymically or typically shadowing forth that future land of uprightness or the living, that new earth wherein dwelleth righteoufness, that period world the face of avlich the Israel of God shall fill with fruit. Ita. xxvii. 6. Of this region, denoting the CHURCH, it is that God says, in a day of separation; I Jehovah am in the midst of the earth. Exod. viii. 22. See Deut. xxiii. 14. Isa. xii. 6. And many other texts .- Again: give ear, O ye beavens, and I will speak; and hear, O earth, the words of my mouth, Deut. xxxii. 1. The address is, according to the genius of the Hebrew tongue and the phrase of the Eastern people, to the rulers of the church under the name of the beavens, and to the people of the church at large under the title of the earth. See, upon this manner of speech, MEDE upon 2 Pet. iii. p. 616.—Again, speaking of those whom God prepares for the throng of glory,

him and in him, a priestly royalty with respect to its holiness and superiority to the world, and kings and

the Holy Ghost says; the pillars of the earth are the Lord's; and he hath set the world upon them: i. e. Though his people are among the poor and despised, they are the pillars of his church, and of the world which stands for them. I Sam. ii. 8. Pf. lxxv. 3.— Again: Naaman defired two mules load of the earth of Israel, which was consecrated to the Lord, to denote his conversion to God, and that he was of his church in the world. 2 Kings v. 17, with Exod. xx. 24.—Again: The feed of Christ was to inherit the earth, implying their spiritual heirship of the kingdom of glory. Pf. xxv. 13. Ifa. lxv. 9. Matth. v. 5 .- This earth God waters, or teaches; Pf. lxv. 9. is fatisfied; Pf. civ. 13. is excellent in fruit; Ifa. iv. 2; is filled with the knowledge of the Lord; Hab. ii. 4.- In this view, the land of Canaan was the Lord's, and was never to be fold, like Efau's birth-right, or a portion in the world; Lev. xxv. 23. It was the land, typifying this spiritual land or church, which the Lord cared for, and constantly guarded with his eye: Deut. xi. 12. Pf. xxxii. 8. In which he raised springs of water or grace. Isa. xxxv. 7. And to whom he says, Fear not. Joel ii. 22, 23. This land is the bride of Christ, and is married to the Lord and made thereby his own for ever. Ifa. 1xii. 4. This is the world to whom Christ, the bread of God, giveth life and nourishment; John vi. 33. But not to the world at large, for these he knoweth not and prayeth not for. They are not of his sheep, but of the goats, whom he never bought, and for whom he never laid down his precious life. They are therefore that world, which & duralai, is NOT ABLE to receive the Spirit of truth, John xiv. 17. While his own world can, and is thereby reconciled to God. 2 Cor. v. 19. There is, in short, a WHOLE WORLD which Satan deceiveth, Rev. xii. 9. because he is the prince and god of it, John xiv. 30. 2 Cor, iv. 4. And there is another WHOLE WORLD, the elect

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downents. They are chosen of God, called of God, anointed of God, supported and finally crowned by God. Their kingdom and inheritance are not of this world, nor of the darkness of this world, but in light, in transparent excellency of wisdom, worth, and glory, into which nothing defiled or unclean can enter, and into which they only enter, because they are purified, and their robes made white, in the blood of the Lamb. Their priesthood and dominion is everlasting, through the grace and power of that anointing or consecration, with which God intended by his covenant to bless them before the world began.

The happy enjoyment of this royal and holy distinction enables them, through grace, to look down upon the world, and all its lying and dying vanities with a dignified pity and commiserating contempt of mind. The possession of true greatness renders in-

of God, which it is not possible for him, or his agents, either fully or finally to deceive or destroy. Matth. xxiv. 24. See the reason in John xvi. 13. and x. 5. 27, 28.

This last is THE whole world, of whom St. John speaks in his first epistle above-mentioned; in which there is neither Greek nor Jew, circumcission nor uncircumcisson, Barbarian, Scythian, bond, nor free; but Christ is all, and in all. Briesly; it is THE WHOLE CHURCH OF GOD, without distinction of age or nation, from the beginning to the end of time. For these only he is the propitiation through faith in his blood; because no others have either faith to believe in it, or any real concern to obtain it.

spid the imaginary greatness of earth and time. A crown, an unfading crown, a bright and unfading crown of glory, is in the view of their faith; and they look for a kingdom, (very unlike all terrestrial kingdoms) even for a kingdom which cannot be spaken\*.

LORD, who and what are thy people, that thou shouldest raise and endue them with so high and holy a calling as this! That thou shouldest not only make them kings and priests, but kings, by a wonderful association, in one supreme and everlasting King, Christ Jesus, and also priests in him the perfect and perpetual High-Priest in the holiest of all! So great and glorious a change shall, one day, pass upon them, as shall fill all heaven with love, and wonder, and joy!

And O that I, feeble and almost infignificant worm as I am, may be made a partaker of this astonishing change, which only divine grace could imagine, and infinite power only could perform! Lord,

what

<sup>\* &</sup>quot;Nothing can be called great (faid an ingenious heathen) which to contemn is great. Thus riches, honours, dignities, authorities, and whatever else may have the outward pomp of this worldly theatre, can never be esteemed as things extraordinarily good, since the very holding them cheap is no common good. Indeed, those, who enjoy them, are not so much entitled to admiration, as those who can look down upon them with a noble superiority of mind." Longin. de Sublim. § vii.

what am I, and what is my father's house, a pock undone Adam with a ruined progeny, that thou hast brought me even hitherto, that thou hast not left me in the stupidity of fin and unbelief, but hast made me fensible in the least degree of thine unutterable benefits, and that thou haft fet before my longing heart fuch an exceeding and eternal weight of glory, as eye hath not feen, nor ear heard, nor entered into the heart of man to conceive! O what a debt of love and gratitude do I owe to thee! and how shall I pay it! I must be more and more in debt even for grace to feel and to acknowledge the mercy: and all my glories and all my joys, throughout eternity, will and must be incessant accumulations of thy favour and goodness to my redeemed foul. How great then is thy goodness, how great thy beauty, JEHO-VAH, King of faints! My foul, thou knowest, often gaspeth for thee, as the thirsty and barren land for the replenishing stream; nor can I be filled, nor do I defire to be filled, with any thing but THEE, thou pure fountain of perpetual good! My foul thirsteth for God, for the living God: when shall I come and appear before God!-Why art thou then cast down, O my foul, and why art thou ever difquieted within me? Hope thou in God, for I shall yet praise him, who is the health of my countenance, the falvation itself of my body and foul, and my God.

## PECULIAR PEOPLE; OR, HOLY NATION.

THESE terms are nearly fynonimous, and relate to the children of God under the idea of his particular government, as their king and ruler. The temporal theocracy, or divine government, of the Jews, was a shadow of that spiritual theocracy, which the great Redeemer maintains over his peculiar people, his facred nation, in grace and glory.

The terms express a union or conjunction of the people of God, as individuals, into one body or interest, and the inviolable right or nearness of regard, which God through Christ is pleased to have over and for them \*. They are one with each other in

<sup>\* 1</sup> Pet. ii. 9. Aas; sis mesimoingus, a people for purchase, i. e. purchased; and therefore they are called in Eph. i. 14. (n mesimoingis) the purchased possession; are said in Acts xx. 28. to be purchased with the blood of God; are not appointed unto wrath, but (sis mesimoingis) to the purchased possession of salvation by our Lord Jesus Christ. 1 Thess. v. 9. or, (sis mesimoingis) to the purchased possession of the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ. 2 Thess. ii. 14. and, therefore those are not of them, who draw back unto perdition, but those that believe (sis mesimoingis) to the purchased possession, or salvation, or conservation, of the soul, Heb. x. 39. Hence believers are called (lacoumespecies) a peculiar people, a treasure of delight, unto the Lord. Tit. ii. 14. Mede translates it, "a supernumerary, or superabounding people; a people where"in God hath a superlative propriety and interest."
Oper.

privilege and portion; and they are all one in Christ Jesus their head, for government and direction.

The peculiarity and holiness, affixed to their name, imply distinction and separation from all others. They are no longer common or unclean, when once brought into this happy state; not such, as they were before, and as every one else must necessarily be, who is out of it.

Being God's facred peculiar, bought and redeemed with blood or a life inestimably precious, they must be counted dear and valuable in his sight according to the price laid down in their behalf. It is the strongest argument of the high value which God hath set upon his people, that he spared not his Son for their sakes, but admitted him as a sacrifice for their remission: and it is no less a convincing proof of the exceeding great love of Christ towards them, in becoming a willing victim of the divine justice, in

Oper. p. 125.—The apossles apply the term, first literally given to the *Israelites*, in its strict and spiritual sense, to all the people of God. Thus, in Deut. vii. 6. the holy people closen are with my a special, a peculiar, a treasured, a precious, a delightful people, unto the Lord; for all this the word signifies. See also Deut. xiv. 2. xxvi. 18. Exod. xix. 5. David applies the word to his own proper good or treasure, I Chron. xxix. 3. And in Mal. iii. 17. it is said of these people; they shall be mine, saith the Lord of hosts, for the day when I make up my jewels (acta) or my peculiar treasure; and I will spare them as a man spareth his own son that serveth him. See Deut. xxxiii. 3.

their place and stead. Surely, what is so highly prized, and so dearly purchased, can never be forgotten, rejected, or lost.

The terms express and imply all this, and much more, for the edification and consolation of the redeemed. They are God's own words, and meant to convey truths and principles of the deepest importance. The names are names of fact and reality, do positively express a particular state and condition, and have nothing of abstract or metaphysical ideas and notions within them. They were calculated, not to amuse, but to instruct and edify the soul.

The people of God are a peculiar people and an holy nation, not now confined, as of old, to one spot or society; but gathered from any or every age, language, and nation, throughout the world. They are, consequently, God's own selection and appointment. It is impossible for a man to do this great work for himself, in the very nature of it; perhaps more impossible than for a creature in a lower form to raise himself into a higher. A beast cannot render itself into a man; nor a man become an angel. Add to all this; fin and the averfeness of fin to this very condition and change, are entirely in the way; fo that besides the exaltation, there is a renovation of nature necessary, which respecting a man for himfelf, or any creature for him, appears utterly impossible. possible. Hence, the conclusion is inevitable, that the choice and the work must be of God, and of him alone.

This truth is so apparent in almost all the terms and declarations of the Bible, that it is matter of amazement, how any can venture to doubt or deny it. But people do not read the Bible for instruction in this matter. They consult their own corrupt reason, and are counsellors for themselves. It is not possible, therefore, that they should have the mind and judgement of God with them; for, as the natural man receiveth not, and cannot know, the things of the Spirit of God, on the one hand; so, on the other, the wisdom of this world is foolishness with him; and, in his sight, the thoughts of the wifest are but vain \*.

The doctrine, conveyed by these names, is not a dry notion, or speculative opinion, but a solid and perpetual reality. What God calls, is what he calls. Name and being, with him, and in his language, are one and the same. It is, indeed, otherwise with men, because they are sallen from him; and, therefore, people have been called Jews, who were not truly so; and others have assumed the title of Christians, who loved only the credit of the name. In the Bible, we find counter-distinctions for these kinds of persons. The salse Jews are surnamed Animonites, Moubites t,

<sup>\* 1</sup> Cor. ii. 14. and iii. 19, 20. 4 Jer. ix. 26.

Edomites,

Edomites\*, Ephraimites +; names of abatement or abhorrence: and the false Christians are entitled, according to those particular sins and follies, under which they serve.

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The profession of a name, or the performance of an ordinance, if there be nothing more in either than the found or the shew, are of no importance in the fight of God. Some carnal Jews called themselves Abraham's feed; but Christ, who knew them better than they knew themselves, declared them to be chilaren of the devil t. Others were ready enough to bring facrifices to the altar, according to the letter of the law; but knowing not the spirit of it, their formal fervice was accounted murder of the creatures, or the flaying of a dog, or pouring out the blood of swine §, in the fight of the Lord. The carrying of can holy name, or bearing about a holy thing or profession, will not purify the foul; but a person, defiled with fin, contaminates all he touches, and turns even his fairest services into dead works, odious and abominable ||.

To shew, that God's people are his own, and of his own chusing, the sons of Israel were taken from among the nations, as the figure of a select race; and afterwards, when the sullness of time came at

<sup>\*</sup> Ifa. lxiii. 1. Obad. 1. + Pf. lxxviii. 9.

Ifa. xxviii. 1. Hof. v. 3, &c. † John viii. 44.

§ Ifa. lxvi. 3, || This possibly is the sense of that remarkable passage in Haggai ii. 11.—14.

the appearance of the long-expected Meffiah, various persons, and multitudes of persons, received the grace to become faithful, and ferved to compose the one peculiar people and holy nation. This was the fulfilment of the promise made to Jacob, and for a testimony of which God bestowed upon him the name of Ifrael. I am EL-SHADDAI [the Almighty or all-fufficient God] be fruitful and mul. tiply [in the spiritual as well as natural sense] a nation and a church, or affemblage, of nations shall be of thee; and kings [kings and priefts unto God, as well as earthly princes] shall spring forth from thy loins: that is; he should affume the same honourable distinction with his grandfather Abraham, in being the father of many nations, or the great head and father of the faithful in every nation, to the end of time\*. The like prophecy was delivered by Ifaiah, which, rightly translated, runs thus; nevertheless the dimness [upon the church of the Jews] shall not be to her as the anguish [occasioned by God's judgements] according to the first time, when he debased the land of Zebulun and the land of Naphtali [by fending the people of these provinces as captives into Assyria+] but hereafter he shall glorify the way of the sea [the coast of that country, typifying the nations of the Gentiles, which the fea often stands for, and prepare a way for them] over Jordan [alluding to the pal-

<sup>\*</sup> Gen. xxxv. 11. and xvii. 5. † 2 Kings xv. 29. fage

See .

fage of the Israelites over the separating boundary, and meaning, that the partition shall cease] even Galilee of the nations [the despised heathen]: the people walking in darkness have seen the great light: they that dwelt in the land of the shadow of death, upon them hath the light shined: thou hast multiplied the nation [according to the promife, like the fand, or the flars \*]: which thou didft not bring up: the joy, with which they joy before thee, is like the joy in harveft for it is the gathering in of the spiritual sheaves, in the last dispensation or time] and as men rejoice when they divide the spoil to Our Lord, to testify that this prophecy was about to be accomplished, literally fulfilled the fign, as in other cases; and began his miniftry upon the sea coast, in the borders of Zabulon and Naphtalim 1.

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. 29. fage These united people, Jew and Gentile believers, forming the one church, one body, one generation, are doubtless those, whom the Psalmist saw in spirit, when he breathed forth that heavenly prayer: Remember me, O Lord, with the favour [red free grace] that thou bearest unto thy people: O visit me with thy salvation: that I may see the good of thy CHOSEN; that I may rejoice in the gladness of thy NATION; that I

<sup>\*</sup> Gen. xxii. 17. + Ifa. iv. 1, 2, 3.

<sup>†</sup> Matth. iv. 13, &c. See MEDE upon this subject, b.i. disc. 25. And also Dr. GILL upon the Prophecies, p. 147.

may glory with thine INHERITANCE\*. In this charming passage, is beautifully comprehended the substance of this essay. The free grace or favour of God induced the choice, which he made of his people: that choice, when carried into act, raised them to be his nation: that nation, thus chosen and governed, became his own peculiar delight and inheritance.

What a wonderful distinction is here bestowed upon the called, and chosen, and faithful? To what a super-eminent dignity are those children of men raised, who are made the children of God?

And is this thy portion, O Christian, thou son of earth by nature, yet redeemed from it? Is this thy calling, thou poor benighted Gentile, sitting in the shadow of death? If David, in the contemplation of these mercies, could say; Who am I, O Lord God, and what is mine house, that thou hast brought me hitherto? what ought to be the seeling of thy soul, so gathered from among the heathen as thou art, and so wonderfully entitled to inherit the throne of glory?

O reflect, with adoration and comfort, that thou art peculiarly God's own; and therefore, in proof of it, that thou must be holy. Be ye holy, for I am holy, saith the Lord. A sheep cannot be filthy as a swine, nor live upon its trash for food.. Every real believer

\* Pf. cvi. 4, 5.

batch the garment which is spotted by the flesh; for being cleansed and clothed by Christ, he loves to be clean, both for his sake and for his own.

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And remember too, when thy foul trembles under the violence of trial or temptation, that thou art fo peculiarly God's own, as never to be another's, never to be loft. He will never leave nor forfake, what he hath loved fo much, as to purchase at the dear rate of the death of his Son. Fear thou not [and this exhortation is repeated again and again] for I am with thee; be not dismayed, for I am thy God: I will frengthen thee, yea, I will help the, yea [ non] I will hold fast to support thee, with the right hand of my righteousness \*. Fear not; for I have redeemed thee; I have called thee by thy name; thou art mine. When thou passest through the waters, I will be with thee; and through the rivers, they shall not overflow thee: when thou walkest through the fire, thou shalt not be burned; neither shall the flame kindle upon thee. For I am Jehovah thy Alehim, the Holy One of Ifrael, thy Saviour +.

Christian, what greater promises than these canst thou desire? O be not faithless, but believing; and all shall be done according to this holy word. It is a shame to doubt the veracity of a good and upright man: it is somethin; more to distrust the faithfulness of HIM, who is the truth itself, who cannot be

<sup>\*</sup> Ifa. xli. 10. † Ifa. xliii, 1—3. deceived

deceived or disappointed, and who is too full of compassion to deceive thee, too full of power and providence to cease working by all means for thy welfare.

## FIRST-BORN.

This title is not always to be taken in the frichfense, implied in the English word; for the Hebrew fignifies not only first-born, but also the chiefr præ-eminent, most-excellent, &c. There is another word word, which more properly fignifies the first transmission of a creature into the world. The firstborn males, however; those literally such; had great privileges and confideration above the fucceeding children, from the very beginning of the world. Under the patriarchal dispensation, though every man was a prieft for himself and for his own house, and therefore offered up facrifices to God (which under the Jewish dispensation was confined to one particular family or tribe); yet, upon folemn occafions, where a whole lineage were affembled, it is with good reason believed, that he, who had the right of primogeniture, made the offerings upon the altar for all the rest. Thus fethro, Moses's fatherin-law, took a burnt-offering and facrifices for God, juit

just before the Levitical institution, though Moses and Aaron, and all the elders of Ifrael, were prefent, to communicate facramentally with him \*. And the learned Selden has observed, that they were thus dignified particularly as the fervants of God, in performing his vern or ministry, and, in being eminently fuch, were confidered as the heads of the people. Hence, in respect to their divine office, they were called by the title of ma, which implies prince or primate as well as priest; and thus what is rendered priest of On (Gen. xli. 45.) and priest of Midian (Exod. ii. 16.) includes both the civil and religious notion of a præ-eminent man, or chief: in process of time, therefore, when great monarchical governments were established, the criefts or princes, were fuch persons as had liberty of nearest access to kings, and, from their weight and influence or for their wisdom, were admitted to be their counsellors and confidents +.

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The young men to of the children of Israel, whom Moses sent to offer burnt-offerings and to facrifice peace-offerings unto the Lord, are supposed to be the first-born or chiefs of families or tribes, to whom was yielded this solemn office of the primogeniture.

\* Exod. xviii. 12.

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<sup>†</sup> The Gentiles, long after the patriarchal times, had this reference to their chiefs, though much deprayed, as every other religious inflitution was among them.

† Exod. xxiv. 5.

This is the last act recorded of the patriarchal connomy amongst the sons of Israel; for, soon afterwards, the first-born were redeemed from that duty by the substitution of the Levites in their stead, who from thenceforth\*, in a peculiar manner, were the Lord's +, and were to bear sin instead of the first-born, as representatives of the Messiah, till he should appear in the world.

From hence it seems, that there had been an antient claim of God to the first-born, as his own, or as the representative of the great first-born; who should come in the sulness of time (and hence probably Eve's mistake in Gen. iv. 1. concerning Cain her first-born; "I have gotten a man, or person, the very Jehovah.") which claim was renewed in Exod. iv. 22. and confined to a particular stock; Israel is my son, even my first-born.

Now, this claim of God could not arise from his right to the first-born as Jehovah the Creator, sor, as such, he certainly has a right to all, and so it is expressly said in Exod. xix. 5. but as Jehovah the Redeemer, whose office it was, when united to the human nature, to be the first-born among many bre-

<sup>\*</sup> Numb. xviii. 22. + Numb. iii. 45, &c.

<sup>†</sup> Hence, the selling the birth-right was so great a sin in Esau. He valued neither religion before God, nor good example to man; but preferred a small present enjoyment, the gratification of his belly, before both. See Gen. xxv. 34. Exod. xvi. 3, Phil. iii. 19.

thren, and, as fuch, being the first and nearest of kin, to redeem the inheritance lost to the family. And the first-born, being thus specially claimed, shewed, that the inheritance had been forfeited; that he, who had the next natural right, was therefore cut off from it by being the Lord's; and that he, as well as the inheritance, must be redeemed by another, fully able and rightfully capable of performing fuch a redemption. It appears then, that the ground of the doctrine of the first-born is this. All men and all their posterity are naturally under the curse for fin. The first-born therefore was to be devoted to God, as his peculiar, for an acknowledgement of this truth, in the first instance; and, in the second, for the declaration of another truth, arifing by God's mercy out of the former; namely, that God would appoint his first-born and only begotten, Christ, to be facrificed and devoted to the curse, in commutation for all those, who by grace should claim this benefit. Thus Abraham, upon his acknowledging God's right and justice in the proposed facrifice of his fon, found deliverance by a substitute of the Lord's providing, and, cleaving in faith to the divine appointment, obtained the bleffing.

This, by the way, proves, that Jehovah, who appeared to Abraham, Moses, and to the fathers, was the fecond person in the divine effence, and who, when united

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united to human flesh, became the long-expected Messiah or Christ.

The selection of Israel from all other nations to this distinction, was a typical lesson or example, that God chooses whom he wills, and that his elect are but a part redeemed, therefore called the first-born or most excellent and valuable to himself, out of all the world. Thus they are named, the general assembly and church of the first-born, written, or enrolled, in beaven \*. Their names were there inscribed in the book of life from the foundation of the world. They were Christ's own, given to him by the Father †; and for these, as being his own, he laid down his invaluable life ‡.

This typical lesson was carried on through the whole of the Jewish dispensation, and particularly in the contest between the Lord and *Pharaoh*, and in all the consequences of that important history.

The first-born of Egypt were destroyed, in order to declare, that as no paschal lamb was slain for the Egyptians, so there was no redemption for them; nor is there, in the spiritual sense, for the hardened and unbelieving world, whom they represent. All expectation of that kind (no other substitute or facrifice for sins remaining, upon their rejection of what

God

<sup>\*</sup> Heb. xii. 23. † John xvii. 2. ‡ John x. 14, 15.

God hath ordained) shall be entirely cut off. The paschal lamb was limited to the family, for which it was slain; and every one of that family was shut up or confined to the house till the morning: so Christ did not so much as pray, much less die, for any but those of his family; and unto them that look for him, more than for the morning watch, shall he appear the second time, without sin, unto salvation.

The first-born of Israel were saved from destruction, only by the blood of a lamb slain, sprinkled upon the lintels and door-posts \* of their houses; that is, by a substitute, whose blood should answer for them in the hour of general vengeance. This lamb was to be unblemished, and of the first year, thereby representing the holy Lamb of God, who, in the divine purpose, was slain from before the foundation of the world; and who also was to stand

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<sup>\*</sup> Exod. xii. 22. The lintel, spours, from spot to fee, was either the upper beam which covered the door, or (as some suppose) a small window over it to afford light.—rmps, fide-posts, from m, to move; the posts, on which the doors were hung to move, or to which they were fastened.—The former of these may possibly, in a spiritual view, intend the intellectual faculty, or spirit, and the latter imply the animal foul and body, or that which outwardly acts. These must be sprinkled by the blood of the lamb, according to the apostle's prayer; The very God of peace sanctify you wholly; and I pray God, your whole spirit, and soul, and body, be preserved blameless unto the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. 1 Thess. v. 23.

as the great first-born, or priest, bearing sin, atoning and making offerings for all his family. He, and he only, was capable of being both priest and sacrifice together. To keep this great and momentous truth in constant view, the first-born fon was enjoined to be given to the Lord\*. God would not fpare his only begotten Son for the fake of his people; and this claim upon the first-born of that preaching and prophetic people the Jews, was an apt memorial of his goodness. But as their first-born, being naturally finful and defiled, differed from his, it. could not be accepted in that condition, but must neceffarily be redeemed. On the contrary, the firstborn of clean animals were acceptable, and on being presented became typically on a curse or devoted thing to Jehovah, as a substitution for the unclean first-born of man. The first-born of unclean beasts were to be redeemed, or destroyed. All this preached that folemn truth, which man by nature is unwilling to learn; that he is confidered, in his fallen state, unclean, and ignorant, as the beasts before God; that he cannot be accepted in his own person, or in that natural state; that he must be redeemed by the blood or death of a clean substitute, shed or offered in his behalf; that this substitute can only be Christ, the pure Lamb, who died for fin, and became a curse, devoted to divine justice, and thereby, as well as by

<sup>\*</sup> Exod. xxii. 29.

his infinite merit brought in, so altered the condition of those for whose fins he died and became a curse, as to be for and amongst them the head \* of a new creation; or the first-born of every creature; that man, thus redeemed, is rendered a spiritual first-born, or new creature in Christ Fesus, being sealed, changed, and new-born of the Spirit, and so in Christ become the spiritual first-fruits of the creatures unto God; and that all this comes to pass, in consequence of a reciprocal transfer of man's fin to the Redeemer and of his righteousness to the redeemed, and by the operation of the Holy Spirit, uniting, in that event, the Redeemer to the redeemed fo intimately, as to be considered as ONE in the fight of the Father, and, as that one, to possess together the everlasting inheritance, once lost but now amply re-purchased, in the kingdom of glory.

The chief things of the antient mountains, or the

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<sup>\*</sup> Jer. xxx. 21. with Gen. xlix. 10. The as is particularly mentioned as unclean.—Our Lord rode upon one, at the true proclamation of the great Hosanna, for a sign, not of his humility only, but of his humiliation. His church, for whom he came and to which he was united, was by nature like that poor and unclean animal on which he rode; and he was contented to present himself in conjunction with it before God, as the pure Lamb, appointed to be slain in its stead and so to redeem it. Herein was his grace, that though he was nich, yet for his redeemed he became poor (he emptied himself), that they through his poverty might be rich. Zech. ix. 9. z. Cor. viii. 9.

great truths thus revealed of old, representing these precious things of the lasting hills \*, are witnessed by all the scriptures, and are indeed a very considerable part of their subject and burden.

The first-born males of cattle, appear also to have been devoted to God under the law, as memorials of this great redemption. The first-born of clean cattle (as was observed) were the Lord's, to be entirely dedicated to him in facrifice +, as repeated figures of the Saviour's dying atonement, and by no means or pretence to be exempted from the altar. Thus they. shewed, not only the Lord's death till he came, but the absolute necessity of his mediatorial sufferings, and the antient purpose of the Godhead to prepare for him a body for that vicarious facrifice, and to bruife it with forrows greater than any man's when prepared. So the first-born of unclean cattle t were to be redeemed by a lamb, or by five shekels presented to the divine service as an equivalent atonement, probably paid if a lamb could not fo eafily be procured; or else such first-born were to be destroyed. These

<sup>\*</sup> Deut. xxxiii. 15. That these were spiritual bleffings, it is evident from the subsequent verse, where earthly things are mentioned in apposition.

they were called underan, because they represent certain moral vices or desects, which are odious in moral agents; for as to the beasts themselves (as Maimonides observes) they neither gave nor received pollution, when alive; but man only. Porta Mosis, p. 288.

first-born from the unclean denote the redeemed from the earth, who are by nature children of wrath even as others, but are faved by the sprinkling of the. blood of Jesus, that paschal Lamb who was sacrificed for them, and by whom they pass over from death to life, and from fatan to God. The first-born only were redeemed, not all; and this shews whom Christ redeemed, and who to him are the all in all, and. therefore called the whole world, or that which he confiders as the whole to him in it. Ifa. lxiii. 19-And here it may be observed, that the price, and means, and extent, of redemption are every where specifically laid down in the law, with a specific application: a plain proof, among others, that the blood of Christ was also specifically determined, and not left to the uncertain will of man; but, in all its use and appropriation, was referred to the first-born. of the true Israel, who, and who only, are hallowed to the Lord \*. These pass under the rod of the Lord,

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<sup>\*</sup> Numb. iii. 13. 47. Exod. xiii. 13. That the price of redemption was peculiarly paid for the first-born, appears clearly both from the law (Numb. iii. 45, &c.) and from this circumstance, that, if the first-born died within the month or thirty days, from which time (as the Jewish doctors tell us) the redemption was held to be due, or died even on the thirtieth day, the sum enjoined by the law was not to be paid, or, if it had been previously advanced, was to be returned. Maim. apud Const. L'Empereur de leg. Hebr. forens. p. 163. The redemption by substitute and gold was not to be paid for any but a living sirst-born, and therefore not to be paid

and are so brought into the bond of his covenant, as to be holy indeed unto him, and incapable of alienation from him. It was this, which made the psalmist's heart to dance for joy, when he sang; Thy-ROD [not the instrument of chastisement, as some have imagined, but of eternal election and sure vocation] and thy STAFF, [the support of grace, ensuring that election] they comfort me \*.

The first-fruits of the soil were also an appointed acknowledgement of this great redemption. All things were lost to man by the fall, except thistles and thorns. The children of Israel, therefore, representing the redeemed, were enjoined in Lev. xxiii, and other places, to confess, in the action of presenting the first-fruits, of and from whom they held all their temporal support, the original gift of which had been forseited + by transgression; and also to own, that, by the devoting of these, which were the emblem of their Redeemer and his salvation, both

paid in vain; nor is the thing fignifed by this typical law, the far more precious redemption of fouls by Jesus Chist, made without a specific determination of characterized persons. It is a positive and purchased possession only, which is the object of the Redeemer's claim, and from thence described as his own field bounded, his own garden inclosed, his own vineyard fenced; not a wild unappropriated common or waste, which, as such, must remain open and uncultivated, and consequently barren or uncertainly productive.

\* Pf. xxiii. 4. comp. with Lev. xxvii. 32. Jer. xxxiii. 13. Ezek. xx. 37. † Gen. i. 29. and iii. 17. they

they and their natural enjoyments could be fanctified. The first-fruit being holy, the lump also was holy. Thus Christ, are first-fruits, having fanctified himfelf, fanctified also them that are his \*. He offered himfelf without spot unto God; and he will, from age to age, present the increase of his church, his spiritual field, without spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing, so that this also shall be acceptable through him.

In order to shew this more strongly, with the firstsheaf of the harvest was to be offered an unblemished
lamb: and the mincha of this lamb (translated meatoffering, but it was a composition made of the corn,
beat out of this sheaf, and offered with the lamb) was
to be a fire-offering to Jehovah for a savour of rest.

This denoted Christ, with his blood shed and his
righteousness fuming before the Lord, presenting
himself as the first-fruits of the great spiritual harvest, which thus was consecrated by him. And with
this righteousness, and with his people upon account
of it, Jehovah is well-pleased.

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The fame thing, nearly, was to be done, with still greater folemnity, on the fistieth day afterwards ‡; by which, from all the circumstances which cannot here be enlarged upon, there feems intended the emblematic confummation of all preceding times, and

<sup>\*</sup> John xvii. 19. + Ifa. xlii. 21.

the final completion of the whole work of confecration by Christ for his redeemed before God.

The first-fruits, as they primarily related, in their spiritual sense, to the person of Christ, do also relate subordinately to the first-fruits of the Spirit in his people, which are by Christ, to the glory of the Father. They were therefore offered up, by the antient believers, as pledges of faith and thanksgiving, and in testimony, that they held all temporal blessings and all spiritual mercies, with the increase of them, on the ground of God's covenant of redemption. This sweetened every outward savor, and at the same time doubled every gracious joy. It was this which put more gladness into the psalmist's heart, than other men of a different spirit could obtain, when their corn and their wine and their oil increased.

And if thou art one of God's first-born, or first. fruits, O reader, thou also wilt rejoice in thy privilege and portion with a more emphatic joy, than can be derived from all the honors and riches of this dying world. Thy meditation on thy Redeemer and his love will be frequent and sweet. The memorials of his mercy to thy soul, recorded in his word, will be subjects of thy constant perusal. Of this book thou wilt join with some German reformers to say, En paradisus noster! "Behold our paradise!" Thou wilt not need tokens on thine hand, or frontlets between thine eyes, or a facrificed.

ficed lamb, or a rescued first-born animal, or the first-fruits of the harvest, or any other outward thing prescribed to the Jews, for remembrances: but the word being nigh thee and in thine heart, and the Spirit of truth abiding in thee, will afford thee the richeft pledges of thy Saviour's goodness, and cause thee to rest, with lively faith, upon that covenanted mercy of the Most High which endureth for ever. Though thou art not of the feed of Abraham according to the flesh, yet having the faith of Abraham, thou wilt find an interest in that bleffed promise; The people that walked in darkness, have seen a great light; they that dwell in the land of the shadow of death, upon them bath the light flined. Thou, O. Lord, hast multiplied the nation, which thou didst not bring up: the joy, with which these joy before thee, is according to the joy of harvest, when thy people are. brought as the first-fruits with melody before thee \*, or as men rejoice when they divide the spoil .- For untous, us Gentiles rejoicing with the Jews thine antient people, a child is born, unto us a fon is given, &c. +

Having then this bleffed hope, how much doth it behove thee to devote the first and best of thy time, thy talents, and thy heart, to the service and honor of God thy Saviour! It must be thy delight to do this: it will be thy regret, when thou sailest, or when it

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<sup>\*</sup> Ifa. xxx. 27.

<sup>+</sup> Ifa. ix. 2-6.

is otherwise. Whom we love, we defire to please. and think no endeavours to please a burden. A grateful spirit is ever upon the watch to shew its gratitude. Thus, one of Christ's first-born and freeborn, will rejoice to shew forth his Redeemer's praise in every act of duty and affection, not thinking much of any thing, but rather grieving that all is too little and too low. Remembering what he was, a Syrian ready to perish, and what, through infinite grace, he now is, one of the first-fruits to God and the Lamb, and an inheritor of eternal glory; he is ashamed at the meanness of his own and of all human services, and longs for a more enlarged capacity both of mind and power to shew forth his Master's excellent worth. The hope of this makes heaven itself, among other things, supremely desirable. There the Lord Redeemer shall be praised better and more; but, even there, not enough. Finite abilities, and fuch only are in the highest creatures, can never scan or celebrate infinite attributes to perfection. But what they are able to do, they do to the utmost, and with rapture. Dear reader, pray for grace to imitate them, and to begin that delightful business, which fhall employ both them and thee, beyond the molestation of infirmity or of evil, for ever and ever.

## LEVITES.

ISRAEL is my son, even my first-born, faith the Lord \*. He was chosen and adopted from among the nations of the world to bear this character and to enjoy its privileges +. And great were those privileges and high this character, though primarily of a temporal and figurative kind. But to shew, together with other important truths, to the faithful among them and among us, that all were not even then of Ifrael, who were called Ifrael; God ordained that all the first-born only of these outwardly favoured people, should be fanctified to himself, as his own t. These, or the substitutes which redeemed them, and the first-born of their clean cattle, or the redemption of the first-born of their unclean cattle, and the first-fruits of their land, were so peculiarly the Lord's, as to be incapable of any other application. If, again, any thing were devoted to the Lord, its designation could not be changed: it became unalter-The word put upon this most holy thing, as it is called, is onn [LXX. ara 9 sma] which implies a person or thing so separated or mortified, as to

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<sup>\*</sup> Exod. iv. 22. † Deut. vii. 6, &c. † Exod. xiii. 2.

infure or draw the ban of divine vengeance upon him, who should presume to break in upon it \*.

But, in order still farther to shew, that the privileges of grace and redemption come, not by right of nature or by right of birth, but by God's own selection; a certain set of men were chosen and appointed to his High-priest, to be the Lord's, to be joined to his High-priest, to attend upon his service, and to keep the charge of the tabernacle of the congregation. These were the Levites, and they received their name, as well as their progenitor the from the circumstance of their being joined to the Lord and to each other in love and unity, for one divine service and calling.

These Levites, being thus representatives of the Jewish first-born, and in them of the first-born of God throughout the world, were henceforth neither considered nor numbered as men of the earth, for they had no particular region allotted to them, but as a scattered race (such as God's true first-born, whom they represented, ever have been) among other tribes and people. They were given, figuratively, to Christ out of the world (John xvii. 6.); as his

<sup>\*</sup> Lev. xxvii. 28.

<sup>†</sup> Deut. xxi. 5. Numb. iii. 12. Redemption and fubflitution, in types, were the ground-work of the law; as redemption and subflitution, in truth and reality, are the foundation of the gospel.

<sup>‡</sup> Gen. xxix. 34.

true redeemed are. The Urim and Thummim were with the head of their brotherhood and among them only. They were the fewest in number of any of the tribes, as Israel in general was of the surrounding nations. They were not, in the cause of God, to know any man, not the nearest and dearest, after the slesh, as we may read in Exod. xxxii, 26. Deut. xxxiii. 9. Their charge was the outward services of the tabernacle and temple; and this occupied the prime of their life, from twenty-sive to sifty. "Age or time only disqualished them from service; not corporal desects or insirmities; whereas bodily desects alone disqualished priests; but not age or time \*."

A lively picture this of God's spiritual Levites, or sinft-born, who are God's favoured ones in Christ, and are therefore styled prom, graciously dear, and through his own benignity precious. The light and knowlege of God is with them in the person of Christ. They are few indeed compared with the world at large; and yet, sew as they are, their's will be the kingdom. Luke xii. 32. They judge of persons and things not according to the sless, but live and act for God in the world. They are seen to be his servants by their conversation and conduct. Their service, however, is but for a time: when the jubilee of their days arrives upon earth, that is, when the space appointed them below is accomplished, all their

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<sup>\*</sup> ABARS. apud OUTR. de facr. lib. i. c. 7. labours

labours cease in the flesh; and they enter upon a more exalted station. In a word, they are Levites in this world, with respect to their powers of action; but priests unto God, by faith now for another world, and hereaster persectly in that other. The instrmities of their bodies do not prevent their present office and duty, but only the present time: soon, they shall be holy and immaculate priests, beyond all limitation of instrinity or ages.

By faith only are they the Lord's priests, as well as kings, below; and so by faith only they can enter while here into the secret place of the Most High, and commune with him within his tabernacle or ordinances: but, in a little period, they shall follow their great Leader into the holiest of all, and see eye to eye concerning those things and beings, which their highest thoughts cannot so much as apprehend or aspire to, while the veil of slesh is upon them and obstructs the clear view of their final destination.

It is to be, however, remarked, that both Levites and priests were of the same devoted tribe, and stood for the Lord's own peculiar treasure, his dear and infeparable sirst-born. The distinction only served for the time, in order to shew, that, as there was a difference of degree among men of the same slesh and blood in their approaches to God, so there is a surther exaltation of state for the redeemed. In the kingdom above, there is no inseriority of Levites; but

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but all are kings and priests unto God and the Father; all are joined by one Spirit to their Lord; all are united by the same Spirit, in an indissoluble bond, to each other \*.

The Lord's spiritual Levites are not taken from one tribe of men only, or one nation, but (as it is represented in the Revelation) are chosen out of every tribe and every nation, and irreversibly sealed †. They are redeemed to God by the blood of the Lamb out of every kindred, and tongue, and people ‡, composing altogether a multitude, which no man can number. But God can and doth reckon every one, for he telleth the number of these stars, and calleth them all by their names. The book of life records them all; and there they have been written from the foundation of the world.

The name, then, and character of true believers are well expressed by Levites, because they are united

\* As the Levites were attached, in subordination, to the priests, by the law of Moses; so the Nethinims were those Gibeonites and their descendants, who served under the Levites, and were stationed as "hewers of wood and drawers of water for the house of God." Correspondent with these, in another economy, are those who are given to the service of God, and labour in his great vocation, either by defending the out-works of religion, or by ministering to those who are brought into it, while they themselves are not the Lord's freed men, and really enjoy not those precious things to which they serve. See Josh. ix. 23.

† Rev. vii. 5. &c. ‡ Rev. v. 9.

as one flock to each other, and to their chief or Lord, They are joined to the Lord, and are one spirit \* with Like the bride to her husband, or the members to their head, they are one with Christ, and Christ with them; God dwelleth in them, and they in God; they are all one in Christ, as the Father and Christ are one; and they shall partake of all the glories, which the human nature of their Redeemer partakes, and for which it was begotten into the world to procure, Like the precious stones in the breast-plate, they receive Christ the true light inwardly, and resect him outwardly, to his glory. They in Christ, and Christ in them, are brought into an unutterable union and communion with the glorious Godhead or Jehovah, and shall possess all the bliss and dignity of that exalted state for ever.

The service of the Levites was also called a warfare; and they themselves presigured all the faithful
soldiers of Christ Jesus. Thus the apostle; I have
fought the good fight; I have finished my course. He
alludes to the spiritual service of the true Levites,
which it was his privilege to perform, under the
type of the ceremonial service of the legal Levites,
which, as a Benjamite, he could not perform t.

How doth all the pomp and pride of man shrink

<sup>†</sup> Thus it was faid of some priests under the law, that they were very able men for the work of the service of the house

iato contemptible meanness before the very thought of this immortal grandeur! The glory of princes, confisting of empty founding names, or of a little noify splendor administered by little noify worms like themselves, or of a multitude of idle ceremonies and perishing cares, or of distracting attentions to circumstances foreign to their own welfare, which confume all their time and prey upon their spirits and their health, or of an affectation of vast importance, which they strive to feel and to have felt by others, without the acquisition of one moment's inward peace and substantial good; all this glory of the most dignified worms, alas! what is it now, but a fleetly paffing imagination; and where will it shortly be, when Christ, the Lord of life shall appear, and his Christians shall appear with him in his glory! What a different estimate of things do grace and eternity teach men! and what beggary and folly will all that be found, which mertals fondly pur-

bouse of God. There by man strong in might. I Chron. ix. 13. or strength for war is the natural image for strength of grace in the spiritual warfare. The church was ever considered here as militant, and therefore called in v. 19. the Host of Jehovah. The priests and Levites ranked as the principal officers, under the law; as the apostles and ministers of the word stand foremost under the gospel. But all the host must sight the good sight of faith, and war the good warfare. I Tim. i. 18. Exod. xviii. 21. Judg. vi. 12.

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fue, as the fummit and perfection of grandeur and happiness!

O my foul, feek thou the unfading honors and the durable riches of righteousness. Soon will all other things be but of very little importance, either in themselves or to thee. The clouds and shadows of time are swiftly slying; and the day spring from on high will e'er long revisit the world with transcendent lustre. Well for thee, if thou canst hail his appearing, or canst join the apostle in the seraphic energy of his language and faith; Come, Lord Jesus, come quickly.

And what is life below, without faith in this Jesus! And where is faith, but in union with him! And how can this union be obtained, but by his Spirit descending to the soul! And how doth this Spirit produce this union, but according to the divine will carried forth into the exercise of the divine power! And how is this power manifested, but, as the fruit of this union, by working in the soul both to will and to do, according to the divine nature, to which it is united! And what is the willing and doing of God, but the sanctification of his children, making them meet for their inheritance, and conducting them becomingly towards it!—O may these things be in me, and abound, to the glory of my God and Redeemer!

Thus may I prove myself a Levite indeed, and evince my junction to the Lord, by having the fruits

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of his Spirit in my heart and life. From a Levite below, he will, I humbly trust, in his own time, raise me up to the full possession of his royal priesthood above. The way and the means are all in his hand. There I leave them, not defiring to know beforehand the mode of his action, or the time of his ordination. Both are best and safest in his own power. The end is fure; because his covenant and promise have made it so: and, for this, I may confidently wait and affuredly truft. He will keep, fafely, more than I am able, or know how, to commit unto him. He will give me, though the fon of a stranger by nature, because joined to himself through his mercy, an everlasting name, that shall not be cut off; and will bring me to his holy mountain, and make me joyful in his house of prayer \*.

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PORTION

## PORTION OR HERITAGE.

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JEHOVAH's portion is his people: Jacob is the lot of his inheritance. Deut. xxxii. 9.

The word rendered portion implies part or divifion; and, applied to the people of God, it denotes, that they are divided from the earth to be the Lord's particular and appropriated share, in distinction from all others. Jacob is a name given them as a name of character and of unity. The word, rendered lot, means line or cord used in the apportionment or mensuration of land: thus, the lines (fays the pfalmift) are fallen unto me in pleafant places, &c. Pf. xvi. 6. These lines, forming a portion for a tribe or family, fell according to what is meant by another word, translated lot [sm]; and thus the portion of God's people was ever by his particular designation; for though their lot, which shall determine their portion, may be cast into the lap with others, yet the whole dif posal or arrangement of it is of the LORD. Thus the word cord or line is used to specify the particular and precise boundary which he has fixed, immoveably fixed, as a perpetual land-mark, betwixt them and others. The word inheritance means, what comes of rightful claim and property. The Lord hath a right to his people by a very dear purchase; insomuch that they are now no longer their own, but his, and his for ever. This

This is also the import of the word clergy; i. e. persons allotted. And though, in a certain sense, it is rightfully peculiar to men, who are set apart from the world, to minister in holy things; yet, in a more sublime and spiritual view, it belongs collectively to the whole body of the redeemed, and points out their fixed and unalterable relation to Jehovah their Saviour. Thus, they are all priests to God and the Father, holy, sanctified, and the like: and thus, particularly, they are named God's heritage, or whole the clergy, as the word means, in I Pet. v. 3.

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There are many passages of scripture, which point out God's people as his portion and heritage, and their extreme preciousness to him as such, which indeed is the true reason of the names. The Lord doth not use terms without an express or forcible sense, as men may and often do; but he determines a truth into fact by one word or title, and out of that, as from a root, he causes to spring forth or branch out a thousand other dependent truths and principles, which, like so much rich and delightful fruit, are for the nourishment and comfort of his people.

They were an inheritance lost, but are now an inheritance redeemed and recovered by him, who is their next of kin, their elder brother, the bead over all things to them, and therefore called, by one word, their no, which fignifies both their near Kinfman and

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Redeemer ..

Redeemer. To him the pfalmist addresses the fifth pfalm, under the title of the conqueror, the God of the inheritance, i. e. the church: and it is thus addressed, that the church may joyfully remember, to whom she is privileged to apply for help at all times. Hence, the church is called the rod waw of his inheritance; Jer. x. 16. because Jehovah in Christ is the covenanted head of the church, using his power and majesty eminently for her salvation and security. All she has and is belongs to the Lord, as his own peculiar estate; and it is represented under this idea, that his people individually may see their blessedness, and possess everlassing consolation, and good hope through grace.

The recovery of all inheritances at the year of jubilee was intended to fignify, that the divine apportionment, which God hath in his people and they have in him, is unalienable under all circumstances of distress, which may prevent their temporary view or enjoyment of that privilege \*. When the great

When Abab coveted the vineyard of Naboth, he attempted to violate this fundamental tenure of all the Jewish lands, which were held under God expressly, as the peculiar Lord of that foil, and the portions of which could not be alienated from the families to which they were allotted. It was this act of unbelief in God, as well as covetousness, which Naboth, who appears, upon the whole matter, to have been a true believer among idolaters, so highly abhorred as to say, The Lord foreid it me, or (as it might be rendered) It would be a profanation

jubilee shall come and the last trumpet shall found; all that the believer had a claim to by faith in this world, shall be made his own perfect and perpetual possession in the heavenly kingdom.

It is very probable, that the precept in the law, forbidding the removal of a neighbour's land-mark, marked out by the antients, with the curse attending the violation of it, has a further and more important sense than that of the mere letter, as well as the other injunctions revealed to Moses. If the man be accursed, who removes the boundary of estates among men; what shall become of him, who strives to displace the Lord's land-mark; or, in other words, to unfix eternal truths, to disguise them by sophistry or salse principles, or to remove the considence of his

profanation to me before the Lord, to give the inheritance of my fathers unto thee. I Kings xxi. 3. If the lands were held like those of the Gentiles, there would have been no criminality in the absolute alienation, which

Ahab appeared to defire.

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One melancholy circumstance is obvious from the short history of this affair; which is, that the idolatrous and wicked reign of Ahab and Jezebel had so corrupted the coun ry, that the Elders and Nobles, presiding over a city, were become the willing wicked tools of an abandoned and bloody woman, and both hired people to be perjured, and acted themselves as parties in taking away the life of a good and innocent man. What a complication of sin was here! Covetousness, salsehood, perjury, subornation, judgement deliberately salse, and execution knowing y murderous, all carried on with pretended zeal for religion and loyalty!

N 5

people's

people's faith relative to their places and privileges in the great inheritance?

If then I am Jehovah's portion and his peculiar heritage, as he is graciously pleased to call me and to make me (the believer may say) I am safe in his protection, and can never be lost. I may plead this title before him, for he has named me by it. And he can neither lie, nor change. The world may and shall be dissolved; but he himself assures me, that his word shall not pass away. In his faithfulness is all my security. Here I ground my hope; and I know, from the instruction of his word and the experience of his grace, that it is a good hope, which will never make me assamed, but bring me to that blessed and happy end for which I am waiting.

O what a comfort is this in all my adversities, and sickness, and sorrows! The Lord, even my Lord, gave it forth for that purpose; so that, throughout my weary pilgrimage, in him I might have peace, and be sure of that refreshment to my spirit, which from its native weakness and continual warfare it cannot but need. And this support turns to me for a testimony, that as I am the Lord's portion and inheritance, so he is mine. O wonderful mercy, that south of Hosts, whom all creatures serve, and to whom the universe of nature belongs, should be mine, should call himself mine, should make me feel the heavenly truth, should open to me the greatness of

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of the privilege, and make me taste the sweetness of his bounty! He is also my portion FOR EVER! Ps. laxiii. 26. The eternity of the gift consummates the blessing. There is none like unto the God of Jeshurun, who whirleth the heavens for thy help, and for his own majesty the powers of the sky. The eternal God is thy refuge, and underneath are the everlasting arms; and he shall thrust out the enemy from before thee, and shall say, destroy.—Happy art thou, O Israel: who is like unto thee, O people saved by Jehovah, the shield of thy help, and the sword of thy excellency!

## FAITHFUL.

To the Lines of Spiles is the word of off

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This name, applied to believers in the scriptures, doth not so much point out that faithfulness or sidelity which arises from the integrity of their minds, as that faith or dependence upon God, which, first and above all things, distinguishes them from other men. They are, it is true, and must be, persons of principle and uprightness; but this in them is an effect of their faith, and by no means either faith itself, or the cause of it.

Faith relates to truth, and, in the holy tongue, is N 6 by

by some held to be of the same root: certainly, it hath a very near affinity to it. The Lord places his truth for a foundation, and then he impowers his people to understand and to rest upon it by faith or believing\*. Or, if we take the word to signify, to carry, to bear in arms, as a nurse bears a child; it amounts to much the same. The Lord ever bare his people, as a man doth bear his son, in all the way they go, and puts underneath them his everlasting arms. Our English terms are not always happy in the communication of these ideas. The words believing and saithful are sometimes applied, and even in our translation of the scriptures, to a sense different from that of the original; and, in some places, the word, which

<sup>\*</sup> To the same purpose is the word emisnum used by St. James iii. 13 which is rendered endued with know. ledge. As true faith proceeds from an understanding which is true, and with it is the gift of the Holy Spirt; fo it flands or rests upon the truth of God, which is its only proper foundation. Hence inignun, science, (according to the philologers) has its name from bringing us (ini suois) to a stop or resting place, founded upon the reality and certainty of the things known. See an ingenious etymology of this word, and of the words. Sientia and understanding, in HARRIS's Hermes, p. 363, The word inignum, in the above text of St. lames, implies, one possessing the knowledge of the truth, and, from thorough experience of its power and reality, nedfall; by faith refling and grounding himself upon it. Hesschius renders maniopogia, by which term the apostle means the full gale, or assurance, of faith, by Becausela firmness, or stability. Heysch. apud Wirs. in fymb. p. 28. should

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should give the idea of faith, is applied to something else, as in Ps. lxxviii. 8 and 37. where it is said of the Jews, that their spirit was not stedfast with God, and that they were not stedfast in his covenant; the words are, that their spirit was not faithful, or had no faith, in God, and that they were not believing, or had not faith, in his covenant; agreeable to a more antient censure from God by Moses, that they were a froward generation, children in whom was no faith \*.

This word faithful is one of the highest titles of the children of God; because the grace, which is denoted by it, enables them to give the most glory to the divine attributes and perfections, and to derive most for themselves from the divine fulness of any other. The world or worldly men have but a poor opinion of this principle, or rather no true idea of it; and hence they either scoff at it as a low, simple, inenergetic, affent of the mind, or a dangerous notion, which threatens to exterminate all the little goodness, which is left in the world. The reason of this is, because they have never known the conflicts of the foul, which the law of God, in the power of his Spirit, vehemently brings for the conviction of fin, or to shew man his unrighteousness; and therefore being heart-whole, and ignorant of their own apostate nature and depravity, they suppose, that they

<sup>\*</sup> Deut. xxxii, ii.

ean easily give credit to God, in the same way as they do to one another, and that they can act faith and do all sorts of faithful works, by their own natural powers, so as to please him.

But faith in God through Christ (for true faith proceeds in no other way) is the fublimest and most difficult bufiness in the world. It is indeed the greatest work upon earth of God's Spirit in the foul of man. When a poor creature hath his eyes opened to fee the wrath of God hanging over him, on account of a wicked nature as well as a wicked life, and is convinced that he hath no power to extricate himself from the deep diffress which overwhelms him; then, for him to cast himself fully and absolutely upon the truth of God, which hath fet forth Christ as his propitiation, and to ground himself for eternity upon this, amidst the clamors of his own conscience, or the just accufations of the law, in the view of justice inseparable from the law, and in the face (as it were) of hell thirsting and opening its mouth to swallow him up; this is a work, is an effect, which (as he afterwards will own) nothing less than the omnipotent operation of God could perform in him, nothing short of the free mercy and gift of an Almighty Saviour could bestow upon him. And, in doing this great work, through grace, (for God worketh in him to believe; not believes in him, as the papifts, &cc. object) he really gives God the highest glory, that can poffibly

possibly be given him upon earth. For this is at once an act of the pureft credit on the one hand, and of the utmost felf-renunciation on the other, that can be shewn by a mortal creature. When we are the agents or active, we do and are feen to do; and there is in this an affumption of hope or confidence from the act in ourselves: this, however, is not so much faith, as fense, and tends not to magnify God simply. and entirely, but ourselves at least in part, or in some Subordination to him. By doing, a man is in danger of trusting more or less in himself; and, by being employed in acts of goodness, seems to have a little whereof to glory: by believing, he disclaims himself, and confides in God; and the more fimply and entirely he confides, the purer is the glory which he offers to the Divine Truth and Majesty. The highest honour a creature can render, is to believe in and depend upon the Lord for all in all. I fay this of the purest actions of the most fervent Christians; for asto the world at large, their activities are low and gross, and (having no faith for their principle) are and must be sensual and felfish. Faith, therefore, is the purest grace, which can actuate the mind of man below. It strips him of felf, drives him from the world and fin, enables him to roll all upon his Lord with a holy complacency and refignation, and to give up into his hands the full management of what belongs to him. for earth or heaven. And, without faith, it is impossible to do the least of these things.

Upon this account it feems to be, that the word of God is full of encomiums and examples of faith. According to our faith, so is every thing else. All things are possible to him that believeth: but, without faith, it is impossible to please God.

Corrupt nature may be quickly engaged to attempt any thing, or every thing: but to believe, to go out of felf, to cease from creatures for aid, and to act faith in a steady, simple, passive recumbence upon the truth and fidelity of God; this is no work for slesh and blood. The human heart rejects and abhors it altogether.

It seems easy, in a way of reason, to take God at his word, and right that it should be so: but reason is not faith, and can never ascend this holy mountain, nor perform, when the trial comes, this apparently easy and reasonable thing. Faith is a gift, which cometh down from above; and, wherever it is bestowed, it causes the soul to crucify that fleshly wisdom, that presumptuous and intruding \* reason, which not holding Christ the head, nor drawing grace and instruction from him, but from corrupt nature only, is in spiritual things the plague and enemy of every real

· Col. ii. 18.

Christian

Christian in the world, both as it is ever arguing against the life of grace in him, and troubling him with such cogitations of all kinds, as tend to draw away his heart, or to weaken his hand, in the course of his duty. They, who know not the conflicts of their carnal mind with the faith which God bestows, may well suspect whether they have faith or not; or, rather, whether they have not deceived themselves with speculations about godliness, instead of enjoying the real life and experience of it.

Abraham obtained faith in God; and the obedience of faith followed the life and possession of it. When the Lord commanded him to leave all and to come out from his kindred and the world; by faith he went out, not knowing whither he went. He reasoned not upon the matter, nor asked the why or the wherefore; but gave himself up in devotedness to God. The fame is faid of him, when he was about to offer up his fon Isaac; and the same is said of those, who are recorded, as examples of pure and lively faith, in that " golden leg nd" inscribed to the Hebrews. All of them did, what they did, BY FAITH: and it is so repeatedly and expressly put down, left we should mistake the works for the principle, the effect for the cause, the mere action for the life; as we are prone to do. Had thefe gracious persons been left to themselves for the execution of any one of those deeds, which they performed; that is, if faith had not been granted them

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them for the very purpose above their own natural powers, it is more than probable, that every one of them had been an apostate in the very thing they were enabled to do, and that, like Cain, Esau, or Judas, they would all have given up God and his truth for the world, or for their own present convenience in it.

If any reader doubt of this, let him try to detach himself from the spirit of the world, to become a Aranger and pilgrim upon earth, to crucify the affections of his flesh and spirit from what they naturally feek after, to give up his reputation, his interest, and inviting prospects in the world, to live in devotedness of foul to God, and to defire above all things the promotion of the honour and glory of a crucified Saviour, and the fpiritual welfare and falvation of others. I fay, let him try, not merely to approve and talk of, but to put all this into practice. He will, I believe, either censure me as too rigid for such a proposal, or endeavour to explain it away and foften it into nothing, or will own, if he be honest to himself, that it is impracticable upon the principles of natural strength and reason, or of (what men call, that common good fense, which leads them above all things to establish an interest here. At any rate, he will be no more able to comprehend how falvation can flow through such a fimple grace, as faith will appear to be to him, than a carnal Ifraelite in the wilderness could have account-

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ed for the restoration of health from the sting of a street, only by looking on a brazen one suspended on a cross or pole. The antitype, or thing signified, stands equally inexplicable to mere professors of Christianity now, as the type stood to the worldly and nominal Israelites of old. Those, who have faith in God and are living for heaven, know how extremely difficult this business of living by faith is to them at all times, and what a real warfare is carried on by that life against themselves; and these will humbly own, that they can never hope to prevail in any instance, or at any time, but through that faith in the Son of God, which draws down his almighty power continually to their relief.

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I may further observe, in this place, that these things do not appear to the believer, nor are they acquired by him, in an abstract, metaphysical way, sull of groping uncertainty; but in the demonstration of the Spirit and with power, which works such trust in him, and gives such evidence to him, as nature can neither work nor give. "God hath said this very thing; therefore it is true;" is made, in the first instance, as certain a proposition to his mind, as any mathematical demonstration can be to his sight: and, "God hath wrought what he said, therefore it is right or perfect;" is, in the next instance, rendered as plain a matter of fact to him as his own existence. The truth of the Bible stands upon these grounds,

and hath in this way been confirmed from age to age. "Jehovah faid; the Alehim faid; Jesus faid;" with the infallible figns following what was faid; are the communications which God hath afforded to man, without descending otherwise to inform his judgement or reason, till he hath kindled and excited his faith. When we through grace believe, then we further understand, in these things, what to carnal reason alone, is, was, and ever will be, incomprehensible.

The creation of the world is, by its existence, obvious to every man. But the mode or manner of this creation, even in the things which are cognizable by sense, how incompetent is reason to explain? The theories, some of them presumptuous enough, which men have conjectured, are so numerous and contradictory, as shew but too plainly, that human reason may easily darken counsel without knowledge, but cannot find out God, nor study the Almighty, or his works, to perfection. If we come to redemption, which is a more elevated and spiritual theme; here reason usually sails at the very threshold, and blunders as she proceeds in a world of mysteries\*. Nor in the office of the divine Spirit is she able, with more advantage, to inform herself. Here, the

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<sup>\*</sup> Reason is an intellectual desect. For those beings, as God and the spirits above, who have the sull force of intellection, need not reason; but apprehend truth by mere intuition." AQUIN. 2<sup>2</sup>. 2<sup>2</sup>. q. 49. a. 5.

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wind bloweth where it lifteth, and she heareth the found. thereof, but cannot tell whence it cometh, nor whither it goeth. Men of great learning and ingenuity, inquiring, like Nicodemus, HOW thefe things could be, but inquiring by their own felf-fufficient light, have loft themselves in a profound, which they had not line enough to fathom. The falvation of some, the preterition of others, and the lapse of all, have been and are still enigmas, which no philosopher, however acute, has been able, on the principles of corrupt reason, to settle or explain. And God refuses to indulge, if not prohibits, the exercise of that fallen faculty, while he commands faith to receive the whole upon his own testimony, which limits all " curious and carnal" researches \*, I have faid; - I have done + ; - I have made known +; -And, Even fo, Father, for fo it feemed good in thy fight S.

This name then, FAITHFUL, given to the children of God, is not an idle found, meaning little or nothing, like the compliments and titles of men, but carries with it an idea of vaft and sublime importance. They are faithful, because they live in and by faith, because they walk in faith, act by faith, hope

<sup>\*</sup> Art. xvii. of the Church of England.

<sup>†</sup> Jer. xl. 3. Deut. v. 27. Ifa. xlv. 7. xlvi. 11.

<sup>1 1</sup> Chron. xvii. 19. Prov. i. 23. Col. i. 27.

<sup>§</sup> Matt. xi. 25, 26.

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in faith, rejoice in faith, wait patiently by faith, fight the good fight of faith, hold on and hold out by faith, gain the victory by faith, overcome death and the devil by faith, and at last by faith inherit the promifes. Thus (according to the apostle) whatsoever is born of God, overcometh the world, or all creatures which oppose falvation: and this is the victory that overcometh the world, even our faith; because that unconquerable faith is born or produced in the foul by the unconquerable Spirit of God. The flesh is not fet to fight the flesh, or the world, or the devil; it has neither will nor power for fuch a work. Faith, springing from a divine agent, and looking to a divine Lord, can alone perform this mighty task. These are great and wonderful things; and the precious faith of God's elect performs them all. It can remove mountains and caft them into the fea; that is, no difficulty or opposition to its life and interest can be so vast, but it is able to overwhelm and reduce it to nothing. And this it can do, because the almighty Christ by his Spirit is in it, gives it, works it, works in and by it; and finally makes those, who have it, conquerors, and more than conquerors, through HIM-SELT that loved them. When a worldling conceives of faith, he takes it to be a mere notion, a bare affent to fomething credible: and it amazes him when he hears or reads, that such mighty operations, as those abovementioned, are ascribed to the power of faith.

faith\*. But the children of God know it to be fubflance indeed, and have experimental demonstrations of its power and reality; for the bestowment of which upon themselves they can bless their Saviour, though they cannot impart the blessing to others. This grace and benefit God hath reserved in his own hands, and bestows according to the good pleasure of his will through Jesus Christ.

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The life of faith is a life of meek, quiet, childlike, dependence upon the covenanted truth and mercies of God in the Saviour of finners. It is a life given, not earned. It is indeed impossible to earn that, which must be given before it can act, and, confequently, before it can pretend to earn; and when it is given, it is so far from prefuming on its own ment or earning, that it runs to Christ for righteousness, grace, holinefs, and every thing that is good. Nothing leads a man fo entirely out of himself as true faith; and from felf-renunciation, as much, perhaps, as from any other exercise of it, may be discovered its real vigor and progression. The life of sense, or corrupt reason on the contrary, proceeds upon self, and to felf-determination, and confequently makes the mind its own factor to the augmentation of its own pride. He that lives thus upon felf is and must he high-minded and full of his own importance;

. Heb. xi. 1.

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though, at the same time, all his conceit is vanity, and no certainty can arise from his reason in spiritual and heavenly things \*.

When I ponder upon these things, and upon all the manner of God's working in the hearts of his people for falvation, I cannot but breathe out an earnest prayer, that thus the Lord would accomplish in me, a poor helpless worm, all this his bleffed work of faith with power. The more I look into myself, and especially under the liveliest impressions of his presence; the more wisdom, love, mercy, and unvarying benevolence do I perceive in this conduct of beginning, continuing, and ending faith, within my own foul and the fouls of his people. When I can act faith the most, then my prayers are most fervent, my activity and zeal the most ardent, my foul the most steady, and my defires for Christ and none but Christ, the most animated and holy. Without faith, or its perception, all is drooping, dull, and difmal; and I may shake myself as at other times, like Samson, or employ myself in every means; but no strength or spirit remains for any exercise or trial of love and duty. I may go through the form indeed as before,

man) how widely reason may be mistaken; I mean the truest and best enlightened reason: or, what deceptions men may put upon themselves; I would say, the most accomplished and intelligent among men." BALZAC. Arist. disc. iv.

and appear the same to other men; but I cannot be satisfied with this, or with any thing short of a tender access unto God, with the consideratial liberty of a child, by the saith of Jesus.

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Believer, I am perfuaded, that I speak thine experience as well as my own. Thou art sensible of thine own weakness and manifold infirmities, by which thou art humbled in thyfelf, and driven to a Saviour. The law of works broken leaves thee no hope but in the law of faith, which preaches nothing but thy Redeemer. Thou canst, then, with the apofile, most gladly glory in thine infirmities; hot for their own fake, but for the effect which grace produceth from them, in leading thee to the power of Christ, and in sheltering thee under his banner. Thus, when thou art weak, thou art strong; and when least in thyself, the greatest, and the safest, and most happy in him. Blessed paradox! none can explain it, but through a wisdom not their own: none defire it, but from the love of Christ, richly shed abroad within their hearts. O mayest thou, dear foul, go on with speed and success in this bleffed way; and, by thy earnest diligence of a lively faith, sleave with more and more full purpose of heart unto the Lord! He is faithful to his own faith bestowed, and will never cease till he crown it with his glory. Look to him, then, with a fingle and patient eye; trust to him with a refigned simplicity and affection

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of heart: He will never leave thee, nor forfake thee. He cannot deny himself: he cannot relinquish his workmanship, his busbandry, his building : it shall never be charged upon him, that he was worse than his word, or that any one of the good things, which he hath promifed for earth or heaven, hath not been fully made good to his redeemed, his faithful. Go on, I venture to befeech thee; go on, with all the privileged courage of faith; and, by faith, hold fast the beginning of thy confidence to the end. Soon shall all be answered; soon the truth of every promise proved; and thy foul made blissful and perfect for ever. O desirable state !- A state, for which thou art living, if living in thy right mind; and to which thou art hastening, in the Lord's own way and time, and defireft to haften on without hindrance or delay. O may he bless thee, and receive thee at last to himfelf, among the Spirits of just men made perfect; the FAITHFUL, whose names are written in heaven!

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## PRISONERS.

PRISONERS is a title for the spiritual condition of all men since the fall; but prisoners of hope is a name peculiar to the children of God. They are thus called, that they may humbly remember from what they are to be delivered, and at the same time may in hope consider the name, and some present privileges arising from it, as an earnest of their full redemption.

It was the appointed office of Christ to proclaim liberty to the captives, and the opening of the prison to them that are bound \*; and not only to proclaim this jubilee, this year of grace, or acceptable year of Jehovah, but to perform what he proclaims. Jehovah himself was in Christ, and held his hand, or gave him power, to bring out the prisoners from the prison, and them that sit in darkness out of the prison-house +. They are therefore called upon to turn to the strong HOLD; and all, who really hear the voice of the Son of God, crying, go forth \$; and embrace by faith the covenant of his blood, are prisoners of hope. Their hope springs from their faith. All others,

<sup>\*</sup> Ifa. lxi. 1. 1 Zech. ix. 12.

<sup>†</sup> Ifa. xlii. 7. § Ifa. xlix. 9.

having no faith, are faid to be without hope, and remain in their prison still.

This captivity by nature of the redeemed is most strikingly exhibited, under the colours of a true history, in what passed upon the sons of Israel in the land of Egypt. If we understand the lively facts of that great affair, to which such frequent reference is made in the Bible, as a grand memorial, in their true importance, we shall see, that they have a meaning which comes home to ourselves, and that the interpretation of them is not private or peculiar to one generation, but is common and general to the whole church of God.

Pharaoh represents the prince of darkness; and Moses and Aaron, uniting in the offices of leader, prophet, and priest, exhibit the great Redeemer. The children of Israel are the subjects of redemption: the Egyptians are the powers of darkness, confederate with the men of the world.

1. Pharaoh was in very deed raifed up, and hardened \*, that God might shew in him his power, and

<sup>\*</sup> The word pm, however harsh it may seem to some ears, admits of no softer sense, than that in our translation, and is repeated many times upon this occasion to declare, that, "to his own secret purpose God directs the worst actions of tyrants, no less than the best of godly princes." The reader is requested to compare these texts in Exodus with Isa. vi. 9. &c. John xii. 39, &c. Deut. ii. 30. Josh. xi. 20. Wisd. xix. 4. Ecclus. xvi. 15.

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that his name might be declared, or recorded, throughout all the earth \*. Satan, like this vessel made unto dishonor +, stands as a proof of God's indignation, without hope of mercy or redemption.

Pharaoh's first attack was upon the children of the Israelites, that their increase might be prevented, that the nation might fail, by the destruction of males, and be sunk amongst his Egyptians. The great business of Satan was murder from the beginning. He instigated the death of righteous Abel, in the infancy of the church. He prevents, in all ages, as much as in him lies, the increase of it. And it is his constant endeavour to fink the children of God into children of the world.

2. Moses, the deliverer, was more than (what is rendered) a goodly child; he was fair to God; had grace given him from God, appeared in a most providential way, and was a chosen vessel for the deliverance of Israel.—Christ also, the great Redeemer, of whom the other was but a shadow, was the elect of God, was born and appeared like no other man, was persecuted of the devil, and was anointed with the Holy Spirit and with power to bring in salvation.

3. The children of Israel were oppressed in Egypt; they sighed; they cried; by reason of their bondage; and their ery came up unto God.—The true Israel

<sup>\*</sup> Exod. ix. 16. x. 1, † Rom. ix. 21. † Acts vii. 20.

have ever been oppressed by the powers of darkness in the world; but when they have felt their bondage, and cried, and groaned, for deliverance, God hath heard them and remembered his holy covenant \*.

4. The Egyptians, the taskmasters, shewed no pity to the sons of Jacob; but gave reproaches, in the hours of keen distress, and to their reproaches added blows and stripes.—The men of the world, their counter-part, have no feeling for a child of God groaning under the burden of sin, but add to his affliction, as much as may be, and, as their least degree of enmity, shoot out their arrows, even bitter words.

These are the persons, who form the scene. Their course and actions are the next object of consideration. Briefly we may observe, that the whole together is a representation of God's grace to his people; of the nature and means of their redemption; of the progression of sin in worldly men; and of their sinal destruction with Satan, the author and promoter of sin.

When Moses, by divine command, proclaimed deliverance to the captives; the Israelites could scarce believe the joyful found; Pharael raged and stormed, blaspheming the Most High himself; and his officers increased their cruelty. All things appeared the

<sup>\*</sup> Exod. ii. 23.

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more dark and alarming, as the deliverance drew nigh \*. In the darkest moment of all, THEN Jehovah peculiarly revealed both HIMSELF, and his mighty power +. He not only shewed himself to be the Alehim of Moses; but he made Moses himself. typically, to be the Alehim unto Pharaoh. when Christ brings peace to his people, they can fcarce know how to receive it, either from want of faith or excess of joy; the devil rages with all his might, blasphemes himself, and invites the soul to blasheme; and the world, his tools, scoff or persecute, as they find opportunity. But, when Christ powerfully comes; he reveals Jehovah in covenant, and also the covenant of Jehovah, making all plain and comfortable to the conscience of the redeemed; and at the fame time shews, that he is the devil's ruler, and the mighty one of facob to subdue him.

The first act of Moses and Aaron (whom we must consider typically as one person with two offices) was to declare the divine commission and authority by a miraculous power. The emblem of this, the rod which God had given ‡, when thrown down before Pharaoh, or the enemy, became a serpent, and devoured or swallowed up all other rods, or authorities or powers, which came before it §. How sorcibly

<sup>\*</sup> Exod, v. and vi. 9 ‡ Exod. iv. 17.

<sup>†</sup> Exod. vi. 1. 3, &c. § Exod. vii.

doth this action preach, that Christ hath power and authority over all enemies, and all things, for the welfare of his church!

When Moses had shewn his divine commission, which was rejected; then began the series of judgements upon Pharaeh and his people. The first of these was the turning of water into blood throughout all the land of Egypt, so that the Egyptians could not drink of the water in the river, or in store, but were constrained to dig for it elsewhere.—This was a figure of the declaration, that the fountain of a perpetual running river troubled with foul blood\*, even the sountain of life, of which blood is the emblem, is polluted and corrupted in man by nature; and that therefore it is so under the curse and wrath of God, as to render it incapable of affording or enjoying that true life, which before the fall it had with him.

After seven days were fulfilled, which was the longest warning of all, then Moses was commanded to denounce the SECOND judgement, which from the river overwhelmed the whole country, and every part of every dwelling, with frogs. This, like the former judgement, though it made a temporary impression, was ultimately in vain; as the Lord foreknew and foretold.—This also is a figure, and an

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awful figure too, of the progression of sin, and of its hardening deceitfulness. When the fountain of life is corrupted, as man's is, it bringeth forth abominable things, filling the secret recesses of the heart, as well as the whole conduct and conversation, with evil. And if inconveniencies or afflictions arise from it, they only make impression for a time, and, when removed, or respited as the Egyptian trouble was \*, are soon forgotten or repelled.

The THIRD judgement upon Pharaoh and his fervants, which followed the curse on the water and the curse proceeding from its filthy productions, was the curse upon the land, the dust of which became lice, covering man and beaft, throughout all the country. And though this was owned by the wifest men to be the finger of God; yet Pharaoh's heart was hardened +.-When God's judgements fall upon an obdurate heart, leaving it to produce all that is noisome and detestable; when the means of supports are turned into perniciousness, and the means of grace harden in fin; when evil, and only evil, arifes out of those very circumstances, which to others are mercies (like the unprofitable dust, instead of fruits, from the fertile soil of Egypt); we may well fear, that the finger of God is indeed fealing up a foulanto perdition. This falling from one degree of

<sup>\*</sup> Exod. viii. 15. † Exod. viii. 19. wickedness

wickedness to another, is but the continuation of judgement begun, which must inevitably end in ruin.

The FOURTH plague was in the air, infesting it with a heavy mixture of all manner of flying vermin, down to the very ground \*. These annoyed the Egyptians only, the Lord expressly putting that mark of his redemption, a division between his people and Pharaoh's people, which stood for an eminent fign of his protection over the one and of his dominion over all. These divers forts of flies (says the pfalmist) devoured them; i. e. fed upon them with extremity of pain and trouble.-Thus what the curfe upon the air produced to the body, the judgement upon the spirit of a man produces to his foul, even all manner of evil thoughts, pestilent opinions, false principles, and all the fwarms of ambitious and detestable desires, which (as it were) feed upon and exhauft the mind. All thefe inflict ftings upon the conscience, and weary, if not wear out, the heart of finners: and this is a further stage towards everlafting ruin. How mercifully are God's people preferved from these torments of the foul! What a bleffing is it to be feparated from the evil notions, spirit, and practices, of a miserable world!

The FIFTH woe from God to the Egyptians was

<sup>\*</sup> Exod. viii. 21.

upon all that lived by the earth, water, and air, which administered support to man \*. The Israelites only lost nothing.—This curse upon the means of life, and upon the agents appointed for its assistance and comfort; making man's table a snare, and that which should have been for their welfare only a trap; is a mark of further indignation, and another step to final ruin. The children of God are preserved from this calamity by him, who causeth every thing to work together for their good.

The SIXTH infliction of judgement increased in awefulness. It came home immediately to the persons themselves. The ashes of a furnace were sprinkled toward heaven in the sight of Pharaoh, bearing this implication, that it should be for a curse of dust (like that afterwards shaken from the seet of our Lord's disciples, for a testimony) against them, producing leprous boils with siery ulcerations. Here the heart of the magi or wise men sailed them; and they could no longer stand before Moses, nor calumniate the power of God. But the Lord yet hardened the heart of Pharaoh.—This is a figure, and the first in this order of curses, of impenitent dereliction and apostasy. The wrath of God, under the token of siery dust, is scattered upon the enemies of his people,

\* Exod. ix. 3.

producing the most noisome \* and virulent fores of fin, and rendering their case preparatively intolerable + in the judgement. The fign threatened this dreadful calamity, that, as Sodom and Gomorrah were turned into ashes and condemned for an example to the t ungodly, so the whole earth, which now is, is kept in flore, reserved unto fire against the day of judgement, and perdition of ungodly men §; under the ban of Anathema Maran-atha ||, which shall be executed, when the Lord cometh with his faints, to convict the ungodly of their evil words and deeds against him and his people q. And the confirmation, that this belongs to them, is, that (like Pharaoh) their heart is hardened; and they make light of it all. On the other hand, the Lord chooseth his people in the furnace of affliction, both to purify and to bring them. out of it \*\*.

As the plagues increase, and proceed on to their disinal period, so do the warnings in their aweful solemnity; though all in vain ++. The SEVENTH, judgement is brought forward: and a wonderful and unexampled one it was. A grievous or heavy bail descending with fire; hardened unmelting water with piercing inextinguishable slames, accompanied.

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<sup>\*</sup> Rev xvi. 2. † Mat. x. 15. xiii. 42. † 2 Pet. ii. 6. § 2 Pet. iii. 7. || 1 Cor. xvi. 22. ¶ Jude 15.

<sup>\*\*</sup> Isa xlviii. 10. with Deut. iv. 20.

<sup>††</sup> Exod. ix. 14, &c.

with thunder most tremendous, destroyed all that was without cover through the whole land, except in the province of Gosphen where the Israelites sojourned. These dreadful terrors extorted an acknowledgement of God's justice in punishing fin; and fudden promises of compliance with God's commands, earnest intreaties even of poor Moses's prayers, and a strong defire to be released from the pain; but they neither purified the conscience, nor changed the heart. When the plague ceased, the former hardness returned or remained; and Pharach finned yet more, or (as the word is) added, or went forward, to fin. -Thus it is spiritually. The terrors of God alone, the denunciations of his vengeance, or even the fight of hell itself, do not and cannot change or renew the mind of a finner, though they may frighten him inthe highest degree. He may relent for a time, acknowledge his undeniable finfulnefs, make many protellations of reformation, and request even the prayers. of real Christians; but, if there be nothing more. than these ebullitions of nature in the case, he willreturn, like the dog and fow in the scripture, to. what he was before; and thereby afford a proof, that it is not the fense of pain or removal of distress, but the abhorrence and removal of fin through faith in the Redeemer, which can alone affect and alter the state of the foul.

The EIGHTH curse was brought forward, after the-

Lord had faid, I have hardened Pharaoh's heart, and the heart of his fervants tor the very purpose of my fixing these my signs within him \*; and also, that it might be recorded and remembered by Ifrael. This was the plague of locusts +, infinite in number, and ravaging in kind. They covered the earth, filled the houses, and devoured all that was left. Such locusts as these were never seen before, or fince.-The pfalmist tells us what they denoted. The Lord cast upon them [the Egyptians] the fierceness of bis anger, wrath, and indignation, and trouble, by fending EVIL ANGELS among them ‡. To the same purpose is the Revelation made to St. John S.

\* Exod. x. 1, 2.

+ Bochart informs us, from Damir, probably an Arabic writer, that no creature is so pestiferous to the Arabians and Africans as the locusts. They come in swarms incredible, march on over every thing, ravage a whole harvest in a few hours, and are not to be deftroyed by any means. Their bite is painful; and the faliva, or moissure of their bodies is the very poison of herbs. When they die, they fill the air with a notione fmell, which is usually followed by the plague. Hieroz. apud Poli Syn. in loc. If these common locusts were fo terrible; how much more dreadful must those be, which God fent. above all example?—A judgement from enemies, under an almost similar type, is threatened to the Jews, from the histing or humming fly, which the Lord would hifs for in the uttermost parts of the river of Egypt, i. e. in Abysfinia, where this terrible and pern cious infect is faid to prevail, and to drive all crea urcs, at a certain season, before them. See BRUCE's Travels. Vol. i. p. 390.

t Pf. lxxviii. 49.

§ Rev. ix. 3, &c. The

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The locusts, like scorpions, inflicting torment, are expressly the evil spirits, whose king is the angel of the bottomless pit, bearing the name and occupation of Abaddon, the destroyer. Thus, when men continue in bardness and in an impenitent heart \*, they treasure up to themselves wrath against the day of wrath, and revelation of the righteous judgement of God. They become possessed of legions of fins by legions of devils. A fire devoureth before them, and behind them a flame burneth, fays the prophet Foel, prophefying in the Spirit, and explaining this direful dereliction of finners for fin §. The LORD will utter his voice before his army; for his camp is very great: for he is strong, that executeth his word; for the day of the LORD is great and very terrible; and who can abide it?-It is a fearful thing indeed for the foul to be given up, as a cage of unclean birds, to the full possession and ravage of the spirits of destruction.

The NINTH judgement brought darkness which might be felt, over the land of Egypt, while the children of Israel had light in their dwellings. Under this curse Pharaoh resolved to see Moses no more; and thus excluded himself from surther help and hope, and every means of either. This was the prelude and anticipation of that blackness of darkness

<sup>\*</sup> Rom. ii. 5.—auilavontov, impænitibile, ERASM. "that cannot repent." Old Transl. § Joel. ii.

for ever, which it signified, to sinners, who cannot cease from sin. Blindness of mind, judicial darkness of the understanding, rebellious sinning against the demonstrations and signs of the Holy Ghost; are the sealing up for judgement, and the previous introduction to it. After this plague of darkness, therefore, to the Egyptians, there remained but one curse more; and that was the finishing sign of entire derelication and determined reprobation.

This aweful token was exhibited in the TENTH curse, under which followed, at midnight, in the darkest and most unexpected hour, the sad and solemn scene, of cutting aff the FIRST-BORN among the Egyptians. Not a house was found in the land, where there was not one dead \* .- All this flands upon record to flew, that they, who reject the counsel of God against themselves, who persevere in fin and unbelief under every variety of afflicting and admonishing dispensations, who make light of the things of God, who hate his people and his truth, and who will not have Christ, the GREAT FIRST-BORN, to reign over them, neither regarding his facrifice nor his person; shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of his power. To these, who wilfully, maliciously, and perseveringly, sin, after the knowledge of the truth, held out unto them, there remai

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<sup>\*</sup> E. od. xii. 29, 30.

maineth no passover, no atoning lamb, no substituted first-born; but a certain fearful looking for of judgement and stery indignation, which shall devour the adversaries. As the Egyptians, after this dreadful sign, had no place for repentance, or further warning; so those, who sinally reject the Lord Jesus, can have no surther admonition, no other Saviour; but must be involved in despair and wretchedness for evermore.

Thus have we confidered briefly (what indeed should have a more copious confideration) the priloners of fin, and their end. The prisoners of hopes though prisoners by nature in the spiritual Egypt as well as the others, have a different course and a different end: and these we shall consider, under the next name, more particularly. In the mean time, lift up thy heart, O reader, and afk, to which of these two kinds thou mayest be said to belong? If thou art a prisoner of fin, consider the course and the end of these things; and pray if haply thy sins may be forgiven thee, left thou fall into mifery: if a prisoner of hope, be thankful to JEHOVAH for his mercy, and bless his holy name; while we consider. in the next place, the means of hope, and the end of hope, in thy gracious redemption.

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## RANSOMED, OR REDEEMED.

WE have confidered, in the fign of Pharaoh and his fervants, under the last title, the progression and the end of fin: in this, we have a more delightful theme, even the means of mercy, and the reprefentation of redemption, under the preservation of the children of Ifrael. These were bondmen and prisoners in Egypt: and it is one special purpose of their history to shew, that, without God's peculiar help, they could never have released themselves. It does not even appear, however distressful their circumstances were, that they so much as thought of deliverance: certainly, they were fo entirely enflaved, that they did not attempt any means or make any efforts for liberty. On the contrary, it appears, that the mixed multitude, after their release, had thoughts of returning to their old condition, only for the gratification of their appetites, under every circumstance of baseness and drudgery. Like Edomites, as they were afterwards called, and true children of Efau, for one morfel of meat, or one mess of pottage, they were ready to part with, what is better than mere life, a just liberty, and with it their birthright, for which only life is valuable at all.

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Mofes, then an old and obscure man, (about fourfcore years of age) was commissioned, from feeding sheep, to superintend a nation. Dying out of the world, and dead to it; he had, and could have, no ambitious views (as fome have inconfiderately, as well as malicioufly, fupposed) and especially as he had renounced them all before in the prime of life, by refusing to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter; under which character he might, had worldly grandeur been his object, been lord not only of the miferable Israelites, (as they have been termed) but of the wife and opulent Egyptians their masters \*. The Lord appeared to him in a burning bush, neither confuming in the flame, nor to be confumed by it. This was the emblem of the real state of his church upon earth. In the midst of the fire, God is with his people, so that they cannot be destroyed: and this token was held out, as the fenfible demonstration of that truth, to Moses, and through him to all that hould hereafter believe.

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This angel of Jehovah, or messenger of the covenant, who was in the church in the wilderness, was Christ Immanuel; and he revealed himself to Moses as the divine essence, under the title of what

<sup>\*</sup> See his refusal of greatness for himself and family, in Exod. xxxii. 10, 11. And his family was afterwards sunk in his own tribe, as appears from 1 Chron. xxiii. 14.

we render) God, and I WILL BE WHAT I WILL BE, and I AM, EVER WAS, AND EVER WILL BE \*. That is, what Christ is to his people, he ever WAS before all time in covenant, and WILL BE to all eternity in faithfulness; and therefore he more expressly made himself known to the Israelites in affliction, both as the ALEHIM of their fathers +, i. e. engaged in covenant, and also peculiarly as JEHOVAH in himself, who therefore ever liveth to make it good, and who changeth not t in his purposes of performing it. Such a revelation, and such a comforting affurance, were especially needful at that time both for Moses and the people; and hence the particular emphasis, which was laid upon the testimony, and the establishment of the covenant with them §.

Pierced to the foul, they, or the greater part of them, could fearce believe in the promise of so strange and improbable a deliverance ||. But their unbelief did not make void the promise of God. They had seen, though their anguish had caused them to pass by or forget, the miraculous credentials of Moses, who had shewed them this great sign, that the rod of his divine commission, when thrown upon the ground,

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<sup>\*</sup> The Alehim, Ehjah asher Ehjah, Jehovah. Exod. iii. 14. vi. 3. Rev. i. 8. † Exod. iii. 6, 13. † Mal. iii. 6. 1 Sam. xv. 29.

<sup>§</sup> Exod. vi. 7, 8. || Exod. vi. 9.

was a ferpent; i. e. when the power, with which he was armed, shall be exerted upon the earth or men of the world, it would be destruction itself to them; while in his hand, as the leader of the people, it would prove a salutary defence and protection. They appear to have neglected also the other tokens of divine presence and authority, which he manifested to them \*. The Redeemer, however, went on with the great design, overcoming the reluctance of Moses, and the doubts of the people; having previously revealed the wonders to be performed, the obduracy of Pharoab, and the ruin which should befall him, in the redemption of his people.

Thus God dealeth with his redeemed in spirit. His whole church, and every individual member of it, is, by the fall of nature, in misery and bondage to the prince of darkness; and usually in the extremity, or their deepest sense, of this misery, he reveals mercy. And he reveals it, as a sure, because a covenanted, mercy; as that which therefore never fails, and as that which consequently is truly proper to comfort and establish the soul. This is so supereminent a blessing, that, at first, they scarce know how to believe or receive it; till, by reiterated instances of grace and power, they are enabled to behold, how sit it is for them, and how sit they are for it. The

\* Exod. iv. 1-10.

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convictions, which attend or lead to these circumstances, are painful; but these painful convictions are as the circumcising knife of the law, cutting off the old man with his works and covenant of works, and preparing them for the joyful reception of a precious Saviour through the gospel. By these means, they go out of the mere condition of nature into the state of grace. They pass over (as the Hebrew word is) into the covenant of Jehovah their Alehim, and into his oath\*, and from thenceforward are considered in the new relation to him of children and heirs, instead of rebels and enemies by wicked works.

All this was preached to the Ifraelites in the passover; and, through the passover and its attendant
circumstances, unto us. The representation of this
most interesting truth, under the figure of a lamb
slain, is given us in that glorious chapter, the twelsth
of Exodus. Our religion is not a new religion, nor
essentially different from that of the ancients. So far
from it, we ought to thank God, with the apostle, and
to serve him (as he did) from the foresathers, not
contrarily to them, with pure conscience. † They are
the cloud of witnesses, who testify those truths which
we are to believe and to follow.

The month, in which this great facrament was exhibited, God commanded to be the beginning of a

<sup>† 2</sup> Tim. i. 3. with Acts xiii. 32. and xxxvi. 22.

new reckoning, or epoch, of time to his people; and, accordingly, it became the first month of the facred, as it was before the feventh of the fecular year. And this, perhaps, hath a prophetic view, not here to be explained. Each house was to take a lamb, which was to be flain by the head of each house, according to the patriarchal system then in force: and this being done by these persons, the lamb itself is said to have been killed, or to have its blood drawn out, as though it had been one lamb only, by the כל קהל עדת whole church of the congregation, between the two evenings, i. e. when the fun was declining, or about our three o'clock in the afternoon. This feems to be thus expressed to declare, that the great anti-type was one lamb flain for one whole church; and that the many lambs, distributed to and slain in the respective housholds, fignified, that the many communities of God's people, widely separated in place or time, are conjointly participants of the one common and general benefit of CHRIST once flain in the fulness of time. The application of this is the beginning of a new and heavenly life in the feveral children of God, as they become, in their order, first partakers of Christ. And these children, or partakers, are collectively the whole of the called, or general affembly of the first-born; and thus Christ, though once slain as the one undivided offering for them all, is communicated from age to age to each and

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and every one of them \*, as though he were, in point of interest and efficacy for each, one lamb, or one offering for each alone.

The lamb was to be drawn out of the flock, to be without blemish, a male of the first year, to be roasted with fire in every part, of which nothing was to remain for another day, not the least portion to be carried to another house, and not a bone to be broken.-This was all typical of Christ. He was one of many brethren, having the same flesh to suffer and to offer for them: he was without blemish or spot of fin, a perfect man in the prime of life: he endured the fiery indignation of Jehovah, as the lamblike substitute of his redeemed, in every part of his body and foul; whence these bitter exclamations, expounding this circumstance and foretelling the forrows of the Redeemer, in the 22d and other Pfalms: he was to perform this facrifice of atonement in one day, at one time, never to be repeated: he cannot b

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<sup>\*</sup> This is the evident sense of Heb. ii. 9. The wasper man, but every one of those, of whom the context treats; the sons and children of God, and Christ's given and sanctified, or separated, brethren. On these his blood was sprinkled spiritually, that is, distributed in its merits among them, for sprinkling is distribution into parts: and hence ensues their separation, or segregation, from the world. His blood is upon those, and those only; and therefore they are pardoned: his blood, or life, is in them, and in none but them; and therefore they are alive unto God.

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be carried from house to house, according to the will of man, and so applied to benefit to other men's souls; for they only who feed upon Christ, in their own house, in their own hearts, or in the houshold or church of the faithful, are partakers of the gracious blessing, which they cannot impart to another; according to that text, a brother [the dearest friend in the world] can by no means ransom a man; nor give to God a covering, or atonement, for him\*. Not a bone of Christ was broken; i. e. he was not overcome by the dreadful conslict; nor shall one of his mystical members, called his bones +, therefore, be demolished or lost.

The lamb, thus slain and sprinkled, became typically the LORD'S PASSOVER. The literal meaning of this word, (according to Vitringa and Bishop Lowth who quotes him, on Isa. xxxi. 5.) is, to cover, or protect by covering, to spring forward, to throw oneself in the way, in order to cover and protect. Thus the typisying blood and merit of the lamb slain was interposed between the destroyer and the Israelites, and covered and sheltered them from the general calamity, which fell upon the Egyptians.—And, in like manner, Christ our passover, who was sacrificed for us, covers his people by the merit of his blood and righteousness, shelters them (as it

<sup>•</sup> Pf. xlix. 7.

<sup>†</sup> Eph. v. 30.

were) under his wings, and so delivers them from the wrath to come,

The people of Ifrael, before eating, were to sprinkle the blood of the lamb, or strike it, on the two fide-posts, and on the upper door-post of the houses, wherein they eat it. They were to eat the flesh in that night, with unleavened bread, and bitter herbs. Their loins were to be girded, their shoes to be on. their feet, their staff in their bands; and they were to eat in hafte; because it was the very passing-over of JEHOVAH, or to JEHOVAH; and because JEHO-VAH paffed over the land of Egypt, in the same night, to smite all the first-born in every place, where the blood was not exhibited for the commanded token, There was, however, this restriction; no uncircumcifed person, whether Jew or proselyte, could eat of the paffover; and, particularly, no or unbelieving stranger; no swn t or sojourning alien; no hireling; but only the not the profelyted stranger,

\* Exod. xii. 43. † V. 45.

† V. 48. The calling of the Gentiles was ever in view; and provision was made for profelytes constantly in the law. There was a first passover, to which those, who were prepared, were admitted; and there was a second (Numb. ix. 10, &c.) in behalf of those, who were not ready, or in a journey afar off, and therefore might not celebrate the first. Thus, the Gentiles, who were common and unclean, in a legal view under the first dispensation, and far off (Eph. ii. 13.) from God in a spiritual sense, were to be admitted to Christ the true passover, under another dispensation or time, and to communicate

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moved with the fear of God, when circumcifed, should have any participation of it.—All this is full of evangelical mystery. The children of God, before they can "feed upon Christ with thanksgiving," come to the blood of the Lamb, and sprinkle it by faith upon their consciences, at the very entrance and beginning of their divine life, upon all their faculties and powers corporal and intellectual \*. In the hour of darkness, in the night of sin, which sinally brings destruction to others, they begin to live. They live upon Christ, and eat him, not with the leavened † bread of the old man or carnal nature, but with the unleavened bread of that sincerity and truth, which

communicate equally with the more antient church in all privileges and mercies. \* 1 Thesi. v. 23.

ל שאר leaven. The word also stands for flesh, mere flesh. They that are in the flesh, or live and walk in the flesh, cannot please God. you leavened bread, that which is fermented, and wrought by the leaven: Spiritually; all dead works, proceeding from the corrupt fermentation, or zeal, or apitation of the flesh, or carnal nature. To these is opposed my unleavened bread, which the apostle expounds by fincerity and truth, that which will bear to be examined in the light, and is confequently pure and perfect. This denotes Christ, or the grace of Christ. Purge out therefore (lays St. Paul) the old leaven, that ye may be a new lump, or temperament, as YE are unleavened. 1 Cor. v. 7. Our Lord applies leaven to false doctrine, the evil food of the foul. Mat. xvi. 11, 12. With these ideas, the evangelical reader will fee into the importance of that folemn command, concerning the typical remembrance of Christ, the Ranlomer, in Exod. xii. 15—20.

is only to be found in the faith of the mind renewed. Their loins are spiritually to be girt; they are to have their shoes on their feet; their staff is to be in their hands; and they are to eat in hafte: i. e. they are to act like strangers upon a journey, or prisoners newly released going home, who do not incumber themselves, nor would meet with any hindrance. They are making a rough and fometimes a tedious journey, through a wilderness, and from an enemy. It is necessary, therefore, that they should be diligent, earnest, eager, and watchful. They want the preparation of the gospel of peace for their feet, and a staff of defence or support for their hands: they cannot, must not loiter, or sit down; but eat standing, and ready to depart. They are passing to God from the vengeance, which now threatens, and will ere long deftroy, the world: and God will pass over them without hurt, in the hours of death and judgement, in no other way, or by no other means. If this first-born Lamb, Christ, is not their's; they know, that their own first-born, their own souls, must bear the sin, and suffer. And they see, that no mere profession of Christ, no dwelling among his people, no felf-feeking, will fuffice: the circumcifion of the heart, the putting off the old man, and the reception of Christ, will alone stand them in stead in the day of God. Therefore, they do, as the children of Ifrael did, make ready for the journey, and affure

affure themselves, that all shall come to pass, as the Lord hath spoken.

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This ordinance of the paffover was to be a memorial to the Israelites, that, at such a time, and by fuch means, the Lord delivered them from their flavery, by his mighty power. And, that they might have it ever before their eyes and upon their hearts, they were not only to have a folemn meeting \* at a certain time, in express commemoration of this great transaction, but all forts of facrifices and services also were instituted for a more frequent and even daily observation; all of which had reference to this first great offering of the paschal lamb, and are only different exhibitions to represent more distinctly and evidently the different parts of the fame thing.—Thus believers, under the Christian dispensation, are exhorted to have the facrifice and merit of Christ always in remembrance; and for this end, both the affembling of themselves together, and also the sacrament of the Lord's supper itself (which last was instituted by Christ instead of the passover, as another fign and continuation of the fame principle) were enjoined as memorials of the redemption of Christ, till his second coming to judge the world.

Finally; the fame angel of the covenant, who

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<sup>\*</sup> Exod. xii. 16. An holy convocation, or assembly of the faithful; those, who were the church.

brought the fons of Ifrael out of bondage, affuming the image of a cloud and pillar of fire, led them on towards the promised inheritance, supported them all the way, destroyed their enemies by means which preserved themselves, and gave them constant occasions of triumph in the God of their falvation \*. And thus, the true Ifrael, under the guidance and protection of their Redeemer, find the fea and the waters of the great deep dried up, and in the depths of the fea a way to pass over: the world and all the multitude of their enemies are subdued before them. and, in the very midst of them all, the ransomed are led with safety to their home. The redeemed of the LORD (fays Isaiah, alluding to the typical deliverance of the Jews) shall return, and come with singing to Zion; and everlasting joy shall be upon their head:

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<sup>\*</sup> Another remarkable instance of divine appearance in their behalf occurred to them under Joshua, who, silled with the Holy Spirit, called upon the orbs of nature to stop in their courses. This was done, partly to shew, that all nature and the sabric of the universe is subservient to the kingdom of God and his designs for his people; and partly to demonstrate to the idolaters of those times, that their objects of worship were subject to Jehovah, and that, instead of affording their worshippers any aid, were rather devoted, by a power, superior, to the assistance of their destroyers, who had the true Alehim, or, as it is usually expressed, that the Alehim is for or with Israel, So the words might be rendered in 1 Sam. Xvii. 46. et al.

they shall obtain gladness and joy, and sorrow and mourning shall flee away \*.

Believer! thou feeft here the ransom paid by thy Redeemer; a ransom paid by himself, and at the expence of his most precious blood. The blood is the life: and he poured out his life, to deliver thee from death and the pit of hell. He was and is Immanuel; and therefore the blood, though coming mediately from his human nature, had, by the union of that nature with his divinity, a divine virtue in it; for

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<sup>\*</sup> Ha. li. 11. To this restitution amonalagaous, implying both the great restoration, or adjustment in their own place, of the people of God, and the final revolution of all things in new heavens and a new earth, I apprehend, the apostle alludes in Acts iii. 21. And possibly, the same thing is signified in Numb. x. 35, 36. When the ark fet forward, Moses said; Rife up, JEHOVAH, and let thine enemies be scattered; and let them that hate thee, flee before thee. That is; while the church of God is moving on in its course through the wilderness of this world, the is to call upon the Lord for his presence and protection against all her enemies. And when the ark refted, be faid, שובה, Reftore, convert, deliver fully from captivity, the ten thousand thousands of Israel. That is; in all the restings of faith, and consolations of hope, which the church can meet with here, she is to consider herfelf in an enemy's country, and is to look forward to the great rest which remaineth for the people of God, and to call upon him to " accomplish the number of his elect, and to hasten his kingdom;" or, in the language of those already departed, who were to rest yet for a little season, to cry out, How long, O Lord, holy and true!

which reason it is called the blood of God \*. The life of God was in that wonderful person called Christ, as well as the life of man: and when he offered up the last in facrifice, the infinite vigor and glory of the first imparted infinite merit to the deed. and through it established an everlasting propitiation for fins, fwallowing them up (as it were) like a little drop in a boundless ocean. This is the merit, Christian, which ransoms thee from the bondage of fin, the captivity of Satan, and the dreadful extremities of these in a future world. This alone preserves, and will ever preferve, thee from the deep abyss: and this alone is infinitely and eternally fufficient. Cast or roll thy burden, then, upon the Lord; and he shall Sustain thee. Thou hast not yet sinned beyond infinite merit and promifed mercy: it is a diminution to the rich grace of the Redeemer to suppose it. An hard and impenetrable heart, denying and refisting the Holy Ghost in his testimony of Jesus, and persevering in this course against all light and evidence, is the great and dreadful fign of a reprobate mind. If fin be thy load, thy hate, and thy terror; come and welcome to this Saviour, this Lamb of God, who taketh away the fins of the world; the fins of Gentiles, as well as of Jews; the fins of this day, and the fins of thousands of years, equally together. The keener the bitterness of spirit under bondage, the happier is the reception of that precious salvation which delivers from it.

Come then, my Christian friend and perpetual brother, who hast tasted indeed of that true liberty of grace and holiness, with which the Redeemer maketh his people free; come, and let us rejoice together. Let us fing the fong of Moses and the Lamb by anticipation; as we hope to fing it in everlafting harmony hereafter. " JEHOVAH the Redeemer hath indeed triumphed gloriously: all the agents and contrivers of evil are thrown into the fea, are fwallowed up for ever. It was thy right hand, O LORD, which is glorified in power: it was thy right hand which dashed in pieces, and utterly destroyed the enemy. Fear and dread shall fall upon them: by the greatness of thine arm, they shall be as still as a stone; till thy people pass over, O LORD, till that people pass over, whom thou hast purchased. Thou shalt bring them in, and plant them in the mountain of thine inheritance; in the place, O LORD, which thou hast made for thee to dwell in; in that [coeleftial] fanctuary, O LORD, which thy hands have established. The LORD shall reign for ever and ever!" Amen.

### FREE.

Our Lord said to the Jews, If ye continue in my word, then are ye my disciples indeed; and ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free \*. He said this to persons, whose ancestors had been delivered from the bondage of Egypt, and who declared for themselves, that they were never in bondage to any man. He did not therefore mean a temporal, but a spiritual freedom. Accordingly he explained himself by saying, Whosever committeth sin, is the servant of sin, and so much the servant of sin, as to be wholly incapable of delivering himself from the bondage; upon which account he added, If the Son therefore shall make you free, ye shall be free indeed. None else could release them; though he could do it completely.

Upon this great truth of man's flavery under fin and Satan, the whole Bible is founded. It would be abfurd, to fpeak of the fall of man, of his entire apostasy from God, of redemption by a Saviour, and of hope in a Saviour; if man were free in the use of his powers, or if indeed he had powers to affert his freedom, and by his own strength, either of mind,

<sup>\*</sup> John viii. 31, 32.

will, or affections, could "turn himself unto God," The fact is; he is so " tied and bound in the chain" both of his fins and finfulness, that he cannot get forth. Nor hath he any inclination, except what may arise from the flavish fear of hell, or from some inconvenience to his natural lufts and passions. Hence, he is looked upon as dead before God, dead in trespasses and fins, without any spiritual life, and confequently without the least natural power to raife up himself, or the least defire after any such thing. Like the bones in the prophecy, he lies in the open valley of the world, and lo, he is very dry \*. The Spirit of God alone could restore life to such bones as these, who represent the whole house of Israel, or the whole family and church of God by nature. And if these are dry bones in their natural state; can we suppose, that there is more vigor or sense of spiritual life in the rest of the world? If these have no spirit in them, till God bestow it; where upon earth may, we expect to find it?

This bondage of corruption (as 'tis called) though it falls upon all men; yet none of them can feel it, till they are quickened with Christ and made alive unto God. And this is a further demonstration of their ruined state and helpless misery. When they have life given, they groan under it, and look out

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for a release: and when this comes to pass, the release is surely to be found; because the life was given for that very purpose.

Every natural and moral evil came in by fin. It was part of the curse imposed upon degenerate man, that he should serve the earth (from which he was taken, and over which he was otherwise to have ruled) in tilling the ground by fevere and constant labor. That curse fell on his nature and his off foring univerfally. All men, it is but too evident, ferve the earth, feek it in the first place, expect nothing but earthly good, cultivate in different modes only a worldly interest, imagine every blifs, but what this earth affords, ideal or enthuliaftic, and, though much mifery constantly attends their whole labor and expectation, are yet able to look no higher, but dread the very thought of a removal. The devil's curse was to grovel upon the ground, and, for a stigma of vileness, to eat (as it were) the very dust of what he had depraved, or (what that food fignifies) to live in perpetual infamy without the least happiness or hope. Out of the dust groweth and can grow nothing: and dust mingled with fire, serves to convey a very strong idea of the keenest torment and despair.

If this depravity of man be true; and true it is, if the word of God be true; what becomes of all those equally ignorant and arrogant pretences, which many

many have set up, of free will, free agency, spontaneity of determination, and the natural right and powers, in spiritual things, of human nature? If we believe God, rather than man, we must account them to be but idle dreams at the best, if not noxious speculations for man, and rebellious declarations against God. They may indeed be adorned with the greatest shew of carnal and corrupt reason, and with all the specious splendors of learning or metaphysical reverie; but, like the garnished sepulchres of the dead, they have only an outward glare of unprositable pomp, covering filth, and rottenness, and what no stomach can endure to examine, within \*.

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 This frame of mind is described in lively colors by the prophet. Ifa. lxv. 2, &c. The words are spoken of Israel (Rom. x. 21.) God's professing people. These walked (i. e. the carnal among them) in a way not good, becau'e it was after their own thoughts, their own corrupt and carnal reason, and not after the truth in the word. They provoked the Lord to anger continually to his face, day by day when they came up to his fanctuary. They facrificed in gardens, i. e. fo lowed the heathen or wicked world in the spirit of those lusts and tempers, which were indulged openly in idolatrous ceremonies: they burned incense upon altars of brick, i. e. pretended to offer prayer and worship, not upon Christ the true altar upon which no human tool, no mortal aid, was to be lifted up, but upon altars of their own making and devising (as bricks are the fabrications of man) imagining their own will-worship and righteousness would procure an acceptance. And yet these remained among the graves and lodged in the monuments, i. e. they were not brought out from spiritual death, but remained This is man—the natural man. What a miferable mortal in his external frame; and, inwardly,

therein as they were born, and they lodge or rest among the dead in fin and in the places of their abode. They eat swine's flesh, and broth of abominable things is in their vessels; not literally but spiritually, for no jew did this or, if he had, could not have made the pretence in the next verse concerning superior fanctity: they lived upon the abominable trash and in the abominable spirit of this world: it was their food to wallow at least recretly in fin, and their feast to eat of such things as please the world, the flesh, and the devil. And yet, because of fome formal attentions, lip-fervice, and corporal ceremonies, they blindly prefumed upon their own righteoufness, and arrogantly could say to other men, Stand by thyself, come not near to me, for I am bolier than thou. -But God's judgement of them is far otherwise-Those are a smoke, an offersive vapor, in my nose; kindling a continual fire of anger against them in all they fay or do. And the Lord would reject all these, and give his bleffing to others, as in v. 9. I will bring forth a feed out of Jacob, and out of Judah an inheritor of my mountains; and mine elect shall inherit it, and my fervants shall dwell there.

It hath indeed been frequently feen, that those who have laid the greatest stress upon mere holiness, as a virtue to be found or raised in man and urged it from natural principles, have, in the first instance, been generally unacquainted wherein true holiness confists, making it up in a punctilious and ceremonious attention to outward duties, or in sanctimonious appearances, without a weaning of the heart from the world or winning it to God; and, in the next instance, have been frequently left to fall into some gross misconduct or other, to their own reproach and to the reproach of all religion through them. Indeed, this is by no means wonderful; for, when a man presumes upon his own powers, it may be expected, as no effect can rise above

what a hideous wretch! Dark, stupid, senseless, bound, enervated, and, to all spiritual hope and goodness, lost and dead!

In this common condition, the mercy of God, arifing from motives and counfels all his own, is vouchsafed to his chosen. As brands from the burning, confuming, and in the way to be confumed, he plucks them from this helpless state, and marks them for his own by an act of his fovereign will. He causes them to know and to feel, that he only had power enough to redeem them from all evil. And he only was rich enough to provide a ransom; but it cost him dearer than the creation of a thousand worlds; for it cost him his Son, whom yet he did not spare, and who would not be spared. Such was the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that though he was rich, yet for their fakes he became poor, that they through his poverty might be rich \*. The full price of their redemption was paid; and in confequence of it a glorious liberty was bestowed. The fum is far beyond human or created computation; and therefore the purchased possession, his own dearbought people and portion, is valued by him accordingly.

its cause, that he will run into evil; corrupt nature being able of itself to produce nothing better.

\* 2 Cor. viii. 9. comp. with Zech. ix. 9. Luke ix. 58. Phil. ii. 7.

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The liberty, which the Lord bestows, is really life from the dead: and he himfelf is the life of that liberty. He exercises, augments, carries it on, and supports it, from day to day. Insomuch that his people cannot fo properly fay of themselves, that they live, as that their Lord liveth in them. When they want the vigor of this divine life, they look by faith to him for a fupply: and faith itself, which is the principle of this life as it exists in them, and the root of all other Christian virtues, was given to them for this purpole. Thus they live by faith, and walk by faith: that is, through faith they receive all their spiritual life, and are enabled to proceed in it and to use it. As the rational life flows from the union of the foul with the body, but so as chiefly to arise from the foul itself; so spiritual life flows from the union of the Spirit of Christ with the foul, the Spirit being the first and chief principle of it. For, what the foul is to the human frame, that Christ is, by his Spirit, to the foul \*. In this way, through infinite wisdom and mercy, the children of God find all their life, liberty, holiness, perseverance, and peace.

But fay fome, who understand not these spiritual and experimental truths; " are we then but mere machines, acting only as we are acted upon, with-

WITSII Diff. Epift. ad Huberum. § 68.

out any proper volition or determination of our

Nobody asks this question in relation to our bodies, in which the principles of action are far more apparent to our fenses; and yet furely they cannot be supposed to be greater objects of divine direction than are our fouls. We fee, we taste, we finell, we feel, we digest our food, or rather our food is digested in us, our blood circulates, our lungs vibrate, and an infcrutible chemistry is momentarily carrying on throughout our frame; and all this confessedly by the action of God, through the medium of material agents, without any appeal to our will, and generally as much without our attention, as the mode of operation is above our knowledge. This is kept up when we fleep, not less than in our waking hours; in abstraction of thought from the ideal world, as in the most intense applications of our faculties to the substances of matter; when we are engaged in a variety of affairs about us, as when we direct our closest reflections immediately upon ourselves. But will any man fay, that he has any share in ordering and supporting this wonderful mechanism, or that it is an automaton raifed by himfelf? The divine power ordained the faculty, and gives the consciousness, of fight: our wills were not confulted, whether we should have this fense; or, now we have it, whether it shall be affected or not. We taste our food; but can we,

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if we would, reject the organ, by which we taffe, or alter the mode of its fensation? We hear the founds about us: but, is not the impression from without, and is not the perception within, entirely independent of our volition? We feel a variety of motions through all our animal frame, not asking our leave or our wisdom to move; some circulating the pleasures of health and strength, and others compelling us to endure the fad reverse: and do we consider ourselves as absolute and unintelligent machines, notwithstanding these impressions of a superior power? or is it rather proper to a fenfeless machine, than to a living creature, not to be independent of a supreme agent, or not to be capable of relifting his supreme operations? But if, in the faculties of the body, we are thus acted upon, as we undoubtedly are, by the medium or instrumentality of the gross substances about us, as often without and above, as with our confent; and if God perform all this in us and in others, for the final accomplishment of his providential defigns \*;

<sup>\*</sup> It was a great concession for a man of Abp. Tilletfon's persuasion, and extorted no doubt by the force of
truth, to ay, "God is the fountain and original of all
power, from whom it is derived and upon whom it
depends, and to whom it is persectly subject and subordinate. He can do all things at once, and in an instant, and with the greatest ease; and no created power
can put any difficulty in his way, much less make any
effectual resistance; because omnipotence can check, and
countermand, and bear down before it all other powers."

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who can prefume to fay, that, in the more fublime and spiritual properties of the mind, which are so much more congenial with himself than matter can be, the same Almighty agent doth not begin, sustain, and carry on those mental impressions and activities which, under the name of grace, constitute the very life, peace, wisdom, strength, experience, and ultimate expectation of the foul? Who can venture to deny, that God is the Alpha and Omega of his people's faith and falvation, wrought in them and for them; when he himself, who can neither deceive nor be deceived, hath been pleafed to affirm, that he is? How he doeth this, is another question, which we can no more define than we can define the mode of his operation upon those gross substances our bodies: it is sufficient for us to know, that it is done, and that He doeth it; or, in other words which are his own, that in him we live, and move (or, are moved) and

And again, "The true reason of these things lies much deeper. in the secret providence of Almighty God, who when he pleaseth can so govern and over-rule both the understandings and the wills of men, as shall best serve his own wise purpose and design." Serm. before the King and Queen, ix and x. p. p. 12, and 6. Solomon says, the king's heart is in the hand of the Lord, as the rivers of water: he turneth it whithersever he will. Prov. xxi. 1. If the heart of kings be thus in the hand of the Lord, "ruled and governed, disposed and turned, as it seemeth best to shis godly wisdom;" it implies most strongly, that no other man's heart can be out of it.

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have our being. Were it otherwise, we could not be a part of his creation, either natural or divine. But will any one presume to say, that all this is making us, or the angels above us, dull machines, without life or consciousness?

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Moreover; his Providence hath established natural means, put them within our natural reach, and given us natural powers to use them. By this Providence, we can read and hear his word; attend his ordinances, and wait at the gates of wisdom. We can be in the way, like Abraham's servant; and, being there, may expect, with him, that the Lord will meet us. Out of the way, we have affurances of nothing but evil.

I have faid all this to obviate a common cavil, which, after all, can only be fully answered to a man's mind by the instruction of him, who worketh in every believer both to will and do of his own good pleasure. When the soul is converted to God, the wisdom and experience, obtained in that conversion, will teach and convince more in one moment, than the ablest human lessons in the world. And, unless such conversion do take place, could the mind be convinced by any arguments or representations, they would be but of little weight or consequence to the person's present peace or conduct, and still less to his everlasting welfare.

God worketh upon his people's fouls by his wif-

dom and truth, which in them are ever accompanied by the energies of his mighty power\*. In the day or time of this power, they are made willing, or willingness itself, in the abstract, as the original implies †. Not by brutal force (as some have talked) nor yet by mere moral suasion (as others have dreamed); but by giving life to the dead, by bringing the prisoners out of the prison-house, by bestowing sight upon the blind, and, in a word, by creating all things new.

In this new creation, there is no bondage, because there is no sin, which is the principle of bondage. So far as a man lives in and partakes of this creation, he is free. In the old creation, the present seat of sin, there is little else but darkness, and slavery, and woe. While we are in the body, we are (as believers) affected by both. But the more we walk in the new creation, so much the more we walk in the liberty wherewith Christ hath made us free: the more we are occupied and engrossed by the old creation, so much the more we are entangled by the yoke of bondage. Living in Christ, who is the head of the new creation, and the author of all liberty; we partake of his free Spirit, and become his freemen t.

<sup>\*</sup> Eph. i. 19. † Pf. cx. 3.

† It was an excellent faying for an Heathen; Deo
parere, libertas est; " It is liberty itself to serve God."

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When we get into the elements of the world, we lose this sweet sense of freedom, and hear, if not seel, the chains of our old Egyptian servitude rattling about us. Our spirits sink, and we are taught the difference between our master's service, which " is perfect freedom," and the service of him who is at once the king and the slave of slaves.

As our persons are made free by Christ, so are our duties. They are wrought from life, and, according to the degree of grace, with liveliness. They are therefore called, and are, in that true sense, through the merit of Christ and the power of the Divine Spirit, free-will offerings, both ingenuous and liberal in themselves, and acceptable to the Father of mercies.

We are freed not only from the ruling domination of fin, through the power of the Holy One energizing in us; but also from its fearful consequences. Christ hath delivered us from death by dying. He redeemed us from flavery, and for this end (O wonderful method and mystery of mercy!) was fold himself at the price, and died the death, of a flave. By this, he abolished death itself, and the flavery of sin which leads to it, and made us free indeed!—Free, even now, from the condemnation of the law, and unto holiness, the end of which is everlasting life: and, e'er long, free from the very being of sin, and the most distant approaches of evil. When a Christian's

tian's body dies, there is an end of death to him, and to all the cause of death, which is fin: from henceforth he can die no more, but lives, yea, being one with Christ, is involved in the essence of life, which endureth for ever.

O what a precious Saviour is this! how can ye but love the Lord, ye that be his faints? how is it possible for you to forget him, who hath done fo much for your fouls? O feek his face continually; feek his face evermore. In the light of his countenance, there is life-pure, animated, blifsful lifeand at his right-hand there are joys undefiled and everlasting. Let us prove then our freedom of access with confidence unto God, and our deliverance from the hateful bondage of corruption in the world, by obtaining grace to live and walk according to his holy will, and by poffeffing a conftant preparation of spirit for departure hence, and for the perpetual fellowship and enjoyment of God and his Christ!

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By the fall of Adam, the generations descended from him became wanderers in every fenfe; not properly at home or in rest, but scattered, hither and thither. far from God as from peace, over the face of the earth. From that time there was no immutable fettlement for man below; and yet every man by nature is in fearch of it. For this he traverses the globe, mixes in all companies and affairs, is continually looking round him for another step or removal; but, after all, when he would lie down, finds no eafy pillow, where he can fafely rest an unquiet and distempered head; no shelter, that can save him from the dread or approach of that fatal storm, which hangs over him all his days, and which at last by falling finishes them. Every thing is (as it were) upon the waves, subject to unceasing agitation and trouble: and his own heart is as difquieted, as all the world about him.

From this fcattered and peeled state, Christ, who is the great spiritual Asaph or gatherer, collects his redeemed out of the lands, from the east and from the west, from the north and from the south. He gathers together in one, and sometimes (in respect of the sewness)

ness of their number) one by one \*, those, who were fingle or alone, in the worst sense; wanderers in a solitary way, finding no city to dwell in. They are hungry and thirsty too in this wilderness, and their soul fainting in them; till Jesus leads them forth by the right way, that they might go to a city of habitation +.

Of this gathering of the people to Christ, and by him and his gracious Spirit, the Scriptures are full ‡. It was one of the outward signs of this blessed Shiloh's appearing, that to him should the gathering of the people be §. But, in the inward sense, he gathered them, from the very soundation of the world. He always had a people, created and ordained for his praise, as his first-born or heirs among the nations, as his first-fruits and portion from a spared world. These he hath ever been gathering like wheat into his garner; and when he hath gathered the whole, according to their appointed times ||, the chass and stubble will he burn with unquenchable fire.

<sup>\*</sup> Ifa. xxvii. 12. + Pf. cvii. 3, &c. † Ifa. xl. 11. xliii. 5. lvi. 8. Jer. xxiii. 8. et al.

<sup>§</sup> Gen. xlix. 19. || The times of God's people are all in his hand. There is no fuch false or foolish principle, as chance, with him. It is to be regretted, therefore, that Eccl. ix. 11, is so perversely rendered, as it is. The wise man is shewing, that nothing succeeds according to human abilities, but that the sit sason, and the concatenation of opportune circumstances are put

He selected the nation of the Jews, by whom he preached this very thing \*. Their ancients were among an idolatrous heathen; and they themselves were commanded ever to confess, that a Syrian ready to perish was their father. The selection was of the Lord's free choice. The motives were all in himfelf; unless their misery, unrighteousness, weakness, and repugnance, could be thought inducements to They were once not a people; but, by his love. his own power and providence, became the people The felection of the Jews proves, of the Lord. that all was of his own free grace; and the calling of the Gentiles, that not even believers have any claim or right for their own posterity,

Bleffed be their Saviour, he doth gather his redeemed from among the heathen; and with loving-kindness and mercy he gathers them. They are by nature amongst the multitude, in no respect differing from others. Equally lost, equally undone and depraved, they neither seek his favour, nor know it. Rather, they oppose it with every corruption of their bodies and souls; till the sceptre of his love, reached out to their very hearts, induces them to feel and acknowledge his kind constraint. This free favour converts and renews the mind, makes

put together (as beams in a building) for all men; i. e. by a special and particular providence.

\* Deut. vii. 6.

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the once unwilling to be willingness itself, and, by imparting a spiritual faculty to receive spiritual light with the light, then fweetly " on the fightless eye-ball pours the day." Henceforward, they humbly admire the goodness which could stoop so low, and the mercy which could refcue them fo unworthy. "Why am I chosen (will one of these say) and others, not worse than myself, (if so bad) relinquished to perish! why do I tafte and rejoice in the loving kindness of the Lord: while some of these, wifer, fairer, and apparently far more respectable, than I am, are permitted to live and die in the state of nature and ruin! -Lord, I can give, and I dare to give, no other account for this, but what my Saviour himself hath been pleased to give before me; even so, Father, for so it seemed good in thy sight .- How unsearchable are thy judgements, and thy ways past finding out !"

He not only gathers his people, by his own free choice, but with his own holy arm. No power, but that which is almighty, could reftore the rebellious, and thus make the very heart of the revolted to be willing \*. He changes, while he gathers. He not only alters the station or place, but the condition and spirit of his gathered ones. They are brought into the fellowship of his own Spirit, and have his own blessed mind established within them. They are ad-

mitted to an indiffoluble union with him as their head, and, by that union, have also a vital and heartfelt communion with those that are truly faints, as his members and their own.

What the Lord Christ gathers with so much toil and at so great a price, he keeps with concern and with safety. His gathered therefore are BOUND in the bundle of life with Jehovah their Alehim\*: the everlasting essence of life is their life, and secures it with his own by a perpetual covenant. This is a bond, which shall never be broken. This is a source, which can never fail. The more it is drawn, the fuller and safter it flows.

They are gathered by grace for nothing less than immortal glory. The end of the work is answerable to the design and grandeur of the worker. He acts like himself in a sovereign and almighty way; and he crowns all he does with an unutterable majesty and splendor. Who is like unto thee, O Lord! thou hast done wonderful things: thy counsels of old are faithfulness and truth!

Their very dust shall be gathered, however dispersed, when he shall summon the world to judgement. The same power, which created and consequently which marked out and placed every atom in the universe, can with equal ease (speaking after the manner of men) collect them when scattered, and restore them to their pristine situation. He sees and knows and comprehends all the minute and the almost infinitely innumerable particles, combined or scattered through his whole creation, with more accuracy and attention, than the first created intellect in heaven can know or consider any one thing. Known unto God are all his works from the beginning of the world; nor can any of his creatures either increase or expunge an atom, or even vary its place or use, without his permission.

Fear not, then, thou poor and despised believer, who art prone to think, that thou art so little worth the divine attention, and fo infignificant in the world, as almost to be forgotten by thy God. Fear not: the gracious ASAPH, the spiritual gatherer of his redeemed, will both feek and fearch thee out. He knows more of thee, and of thy ways, than thou canst know of thyself, or of them. Thou art an object in his eye more distinguished, than the kings and emperors, as fuch, of this fallen world. An hair of thine head falleth not to the ground without thy father's knowledge: how much less the least of the dear concerns of thy precious foul! Use not then the old complaint, Jehovah hath forfaken me, and my Lord hath forgotten me, without acknowledging at the same time the old confolation; can a woman forget her fucking child, that she should not have compassion on the

fon of her womb? yea, they may forget, yet will I not forget thee (faith the Lord) : Behold; I have graven thee upon the palms of my hands; thy walls are continually before me \*.

When the great spiritual harvest shall be gathered in, or " the number of God's elect be accomplished;" then shall the end come, and the world, having anfwered the great defign of the builder, like a ufoless scaffold, shall be taken down for the fuel of destruction. Then shall the holy city, the new Jerusalem, (which will in that day be completely in unity with itself) come down from God out of heaven, prepared as a bride adorned for her busband: and then shall the great voice be heard out of heaven, faying, Behold the tabernacle of God is with men, and he will dwell with them, and they shall be his people, and God himself shall be with them, and be their God. And God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes; and there shall be no more death, neither forrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain; for the former things are passed away .- Thus hath the Alpha and Omega said, the beginning and the end, the leader and the confummater of all things +.

\* Isa. xlix. 15, 16. † Rev. xxi. 3-6.

#### HEALED.

As Christ is the great physician, so his people are, by natural contamination, sick and do need to be healed. Adam impaired the spiritual, as well as natural, health of his progeny, which nothing but omnipotence could remedy; and therefore omnipotence, clothing itself with the sless of Jesus, hath effectually interposed. Jehovah sent his word and healed them, and delivered them from their destructions.

This lesson was taught in the history of the Jews at Marah\*. Here they found only bitter water, of which they could not drink; and when Moses cried unto the Lord, the Lord shewed [or taught] him a TREE, which, being thrown in, sweetened the waters. There, at that time, or upon that occasion, he established or placed before them a statute and a decree [a rule of instruction in his holy mind and will] and there he proved them. This promise was also added, upon the observance of the voice and commandment of the Lord; I will put none of these diseases upon thee, which I have brought upon the Egyptians; for I am Jehovah, that healeth thee.

A fublime and spiritual instruction was apparently

\* Exod. xv. 23.

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intended

intended in these words. When believers have entered upon their pilgrimage, they find fometimes if not often, for the trial of their faith, the water, the bitter water, of affliction and trouble. Carnal profesfors murmur at such an event, and look back for relief upon Egypt or the world, with the carnal Jews; but the real Christian, like Moses, crieth unto the Lord; and the Lord teacheth him how to use the tree of his appointment, which can heal all his difeases, and sweeten his forrows. This tree is the TREE OF LIFE, which groweth in the midst of the heavenly paradife; and its leaves are for the healing of the nations \*. The Lord Christ is this facred and medicinal tree; and he, that cometh by faith unto him, in spiritual disease or distress, shall find him the healer of the foul; yielding, as an olive, the oil of his grace; and, as a vine, the wine of his confolation and peace.

A lesion, of the same tendency with that of the waters at Marab, was also inculcated by healing the stings of the siery serpents, sent among the Israelites. It was in believing the word of the Lord, and in looking up to the instituted sign of a serpent of brass, that they were cured of the poisonous malady, which destroyed much people on every side.

Thus the old ferpent of fire hath bitten us all;

<sup>\*</sup> Gen. ii. 9. with Rev. xxii. 2.

first, our progenitor, and, through him, every one of us. As the least particle of poison from a common ferpent will prefently infect the whole frame to its destruction; so it is not merely the number or quantity of fin, that poison of the foul, but its nature, received within us, which has difeafed us throughout, and threatens us daily with fomething worfe than the grave. To Christ crucified; to him, who became a curfe, as a fin-bearing ferpent itself, lifted on high; must we look by faith for the antidote. By faith we receive its virtue, and become healed of our plague. Jefus cures all the malady of fin, by taking it all upon himself. And he makes an end of sin, and abforbs its baleful poifon, when, individually, he applies his infinite virtue to the believing foul. His crofs, which was the instrument of the most accursed death, becomes like the tree of life to the longing eye of the Christian, and changes the forrows of his heart, like the bitter waters of Marah, into fweetness and delight.

Into all this Christ entered freely and voluntarily. The wounds of the cross, without his own will, had no power to injure or to kill; for, being the Prince of life, he could have healed and sustained himself, as well as others. He cried with a loud voice, possessing full strength to live, if he had pleased to live. He first bowed his head, and then died (contrary to the usage of mortals in the same circumstances) as

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the very Lord and Master of death itself, to whom he submitted without compulsion, because, as the true and availing sacrifice, he was sponte suâ to lay down his life.

He was the willing substitute for sinners made willing to embrace him in the day of his power. The wrath of heaven, like the fire upon the typical sacrifices, which were offered up at the first establishment of the tabernacle and temple, fell upon this Lamb of God, who was thereby invested with the curse due to their sins, in their behalf and in their stead. And this perfectly insured their full and free salvation \*.

Reader; hath the Lord put bitterness into thy cup, or placed forrows in the way of thy pilgrimage? Remember this instruction of his word, and by faith apply this tree of life, which yieldeth wisdom and comfort, to the distresses of thine heart. Use this remedy, which hath been tried for ages; and thou shalt find a distillation of more precious balm than that of Gilead, for the wounds of sin, or the maladies of life. Look unto him, made sin, made disease, made a curse, for thee; and be saved: he invites, he commands, thee thus to look for relies. Nor can he deny himself, or be worse than his word. If thou canst believe, all things are possible to him that be-

<sup>\*</sup> See this strikingly illustrated in Lev. ix. 24. 2 Chron. vii. 1. &c. with Ifa. liii. 4, 5.

lieveth. Cast thy cares, thy whole lot, yea, thy very foul, upon this Lord of truth, this faithful and never-failing God. Try him, as he tries thee. He fends affliction; do you throw the care of it upon him. He proves thy confidence in him: prove thou his fidelity towards thee. Come with a fingle eye, and a simply sincere heart, to the throne of his grace: ask for grace, with the holy boldness or liberty of his children, and fubmit the whole to him for his own glory. Say, with Jeremiah; Heal me, O Lord, my strength and my fortress, and my refuge in the day of affliction, and I shall be healed; save me, and I shall be saved; for thou, thou, even thou, art my praise \*. Then wait with the patience of faith; and fee, if he will not make good his truth, either by causing thy grief to depart, or by enabling thee to bear it. Whatever method he uses, thou shalt find it in the end for his glory, and for thy good: and what else canst thou presume to defire?

Thou art called to a warfare, but not at thy own charge. It is beyond thee to find thyfelf in courage, wisdom, and support, for so great a concern. Thou wouldest soon deny thy Master with Peter, and betray him like Judas; if Satan were loosed upon thee, and thou hadst no strength but thine own. All Christ's disciples, bold as they were in their pro-

<sup>- \*</sup> Jer. xvii. 14. with xvi. 19-

ret

fessed resolutions to abide by him, and favoured as they had been by his presence, for fook him and fled in his last great conflict with the powers of darkness. They were poor too, and had almost nothing in the world to lofe. And yet it is remarkable, that, at the fame time, fome richer disciples, who were fuch secretly before for fear of the fews, now had grace given them to step forward boldly, to own their crucified Lord, to demand his dead body, and to shew their love by anointing it with the richest ointments and spices. All which shews, that the poor cannot confess Christ, merely because they have nothing to part with for his fake; nor the rich, because they have nothing to gain by him in the world; but that Christians, in all conditions of life, have only constancy and courage, at any time, or for any occasion, but as they derive it from him. The poor left him by himself to suffer, and the rich had not power to exert their interest either to prevent or to 10ften his fufferings; for these were abfolutely needful for the falvation of both: and yet providence honored the last, being eminent and confpicuous as members of the Sanhedrim, with the care of his person and burial, that it might the more evidently appear, that he both died and rofe again, and that all the scriptures, foretelling these circumstances, were perfectly accomplished in him.

Believer; lay up these things in thine heart, and trust

trust in the Lord at all times; for he is thine only refuge, and thine only help, in the time of need: and verily thou shalt not be disappointed of thine hope.

#### FED.

THERE are many emblems, used in the scripture, to fhew the entire as well as certain dependance of the children of God for all their support and nourishment from him. Among others, it is a very principal one, which was shewn to the Ifraelites, in their daily food the manna, while they passed through the wilderness. This was prophetically styled bread of heaven, bread of the mighty \*: and the apostle calls it, spiritual meat + or food, that is, food having a fpiritual fignification. This fignification our Lord himself explains. The bread of God is he, which cometh down from heaven, and giveth life unto the world .- I am THE BREAD OF LIFE !. In faying this, he affirms his divinity; for Jehovah only is and can be the nourisher of life; and this Moses sufficiently indicates under that fign of Christ, the outward manna; JEHOVAH fed thee with manna, that

<sup>\*</sup> Pf. lxxviii. 24, 25. דירים † 1 Cor. x. 3.

<sup>‡</sup> John vi. 33, 35.

he might make thee know that man doth not live by bread only, but [with a grade of groceedeth from the mouth of Jehovah [which is translated in the New Testament by, επι παθι ρημαθι, κ. τ. λ by every word, or the whole word, &c.] doth man live \*. Christ is that word, that power, that life, that bread, which cometh down from heaven, that a man may eat thereof, and not die.—If any man eat of this bread, he shall live for ever.—The words that I speak unto you, they are spirit, and they are life +; i. e. because his divine life and power are in them.

The people of God are as miraculously sed now, as ever they were of old. Christ is their spiritual life; and he nourishes the life, which he imparts, from day to day. He gives himself freely from above, as the manna also came freely down from the sky. They look up to him, and expect him; and they are not disappointed of their hope. He supplies all their need, spiritual and temporal; and makes every thing work together for their good. They live not by outward bread only, or any other natural means of life; but by all which springeth forth, in every instance of providence or grace, from him, who is the life of their souls. When they hunger most for him, as is the case of hunger in natural health, they

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<sup>\*</sup> Deut. viii. 3. Mat. iv. 4. † John vi. 63.

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are in the best and soundest condition; and he readily solvery hungry soul with his goodness. From day to day do they look up, and ask for this their daily bread, without whose support, their strength and hope must fail; but by whose nourishment, they are strong and lively in the ways of salvation, and ready to every good word and work. They can then do all things through this living bread, which strengtheneth them.

Appearances may be and often are against them, as they were to the outward sense of the Israelites in passing forty years through a dreary and miserable wilderness; but, as their bread did not fail and as their waters were fure, fo is the cafe now with every one of God's people, in their pilgrimage through the world. His eye is ever upon them: his hand is ready to help them: and no enemy can overwhelm them. They may be and must be in straits and difficulties at times; but these are for proof and trial of faith, and not for destruction. When the Lord interpofes in these, and discovers his particular goodnefs; then the believer should observe the token, should fix in his mind a memorial, a spiritual Ebenezer, and should say with thankfulness, " In this case also hath the Lord helped me; and this present token for good O may I remember in future difficulties, and by faith pray for and find the same deliverance." The Lord indeed is not flack concerning his promise, though

though we may be flow of heart to believe it. There is not an individual moment in a believer's life, which is not confidered and provided for by him. Our ignorance, or want of spiritual fight, is no bar to his wisdom, nor bound to his providence; but he is carrying on the great defign of our falvation, as much in the stormy rain of affliction, which may pierce us through and render us uncomfortable in ourfelves, as in the fun-fhine of prosperity, when all things appear gay and chearful. He is not to be understood by our gross feelings, which have often too much of earth and fenfuality in them, but by his own faithfulness and truth, which cannot alter, nor even be fulpended for a moment. May we then use the words of Habakkuk in the faith of Habakkuk: Although the fig-tree shall not blossom, neither shall fruit be in the vines, the labor of the olive shall fail, and the fields shall yield no meat, the flock shall be cut off from the fold, and there shall be no herd in the stalls: yet I will rejoice in the Lord, I will joy in the God of my Calvation!

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# GOD's HUSBANDRY.

NATURE, or the visible and material world, beautifully accords in testimony with the declarations of grace; nor is this at all furprifing, when we confider, that HE, who created the works, gave forth the word, and that all things were made by the GREAT REDEEMER, and for him. The natural objects are, therefore, frequently appealed to in the Scriptures. as illustrations, as fymbols, as fensible proofs, of the production and progression of those spiritual acts, which the Lord exhibits in or for his people, in order to perfect their falvation. He that reads nature with an evangelic or spiritual eye, views it encompassed with rays of glory and goodness, which the sensualist and the worldling are fo far from understanding, that they really have not the least conception of them. Though all the works of God, therefore, in various respects, shew forth his praise: yet his faints, and his faints only, can, with gratitude of spirit, bless him for them; because they only can speak of the glorious majesty of his kingdom, and talk of his power. They have felt this power of their Lord and Father in their hearts; and their mouths are opened by him to celebrate his goodness and his truth.

Under

Under this term HUSBANDRY, the Spirit of God discovers to us another representation of his holy agency upon the souls of men: and the more able we are to examine it, the more striking and beautiful will this representation appear to us.

Husbandry among men is distributed into several species or kinds. We have the husbandry of the stell or farm, of the garden, of the vineyard, and the plantation. These all require, according to their peculiar circumstances, the constant culture and superintendance of human industry; or they would produce nothing, or nothing of utility.

We know, likewise, that the most cultivated field or garden, the most fertile vineyard, and most beautiful plantation, were originally a rude and desolate common, a melancholy and unproductive wilderness, the range only of savage and devouring beasts, or of men perhaps more wild and savage than they. It was science and industry, through providence, which changed these gloomy circumstances into their present condition of use and beauty, and made regions, which were almost a picture of the valley of the shadow of death, the chearful haunts of domestic and useful creatures, and of social and civilized men.

We are also sensible, from constant experience, that the most fertile field or vineyard, the most enchanting garden or plantation, let alone and permitted to remain without culture and skill, soon returns

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to its savage state of nature, and would bear nothing but contemptible fruits and noxious weeds.

All this is the expressive picture of redeemed men. The Lord found his people in a defert land, and in the waste howling wilderness. Yea, Zion itself was once a wilderness, a part of the desolate waste, and undistinguishable from it; till the great Husbandman marked out her lines, raifed up her fences, and thereby divided, fanctified, or fet her apart for himfelf, from all the miferable foil laying round about her. This was a felection, according to his own plan or will; according to the mere spontaneous exertion of his own almighty power. The people of God could no more have appointed or rescued themselves from the common wretchedness of the world. than a garden or field could have chosen its own peculiar fituation, or wrought itself up into fruitfulness and beauty. The natural truth is undeniable and obvious; and what that natural truth preaches, is equally so, both in the word of God, in continual fact, and in the uniform experience of his redeemed. They fought not him, but he fought out (agreeable to the name he has given them, in Ifa. lxii. 12.) and gave unto them the bounds of their habitation and turned the defert place into his spiritual inclosure or They only became a part of his HUSBAN-DRY, because it pleased him to make them such; and no other reason can they or do they desire to give, and

and no other does his holy revelation afford, of this gracious and wonderful matter. They look upon every attempt to be wifer than this, as a prefumption, which God hath already condemned for its folly, and will hereafter cover with shame.

As this spiritual field, garden, vineyard, or plantation, is selected and inclosed by Jehovah; so is it defended, arranged, supplied, weeded, and sertilized, by him. His eye is ever upon it. It is the constant work of his hands. He waters it every moment. He guards it from Satan, the wild boar of the wood. He both prunes and gives sap to all the branches, that they may bring forth more fruit, and more and better fruit. And he finally gathers the corn into his garner, and his ripe and pleasant fruits to his home.

Were the Lord to leave this his husbandry alone to itself; it would, like the husbandry in nature, soon produce nothing but weeds and thorns: the inclosures would be broken down, and the whole run into wilderness again. But the great Husbandman is ever breaking up some fallow ground, repairing some spiritual breaches, taking away some injurious weeds, introducing some useful plants, nourishing some tender herbs or trees, preparing manure for some needy ground, securing some weak or falling branches, and, in a word, watching over the whole with an all-seeing eye, and providing for the whole with an unremitting hand. O what loving-kindness and mercy

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are here exhibited for this once barren and defolate field! And how precious, how eternally precious, is it become to the Lord of life and glory, fince he was pleafed to fet his love upon it, and to live and walk therein!—It is indeed bis portion; he calls it so; and the lot of his inheritance, which he hath procured for himself; and who shall take it away from him?

In this spiritual field or garden, there is undoubtedly, as in the natural, a great variety of plants, and a great difference in fize, in use, in fruitfulness, and in beauty; but still they are all good for fomething; all have a certain produce, according to this Hufbandman's defign; from him entirely their fruit, or their virtue, is found; and all are the dear objects of his delight, and shew forth his power and praife. Every leaf receives his air or spirit, for transpiration and life: every flower reflects one or more of the various rays of his beaming and overspreading light: every fruit is nourished and sweetened, by his genial and attempered heat. All that lives and grows in this garden, as well as the garden itself, is from the fostering production of his hand, and the determining attention of his eye.

When the Lord causes a plant or tree to spring up in his garden, it is usually at first very small and tender, and requires particular care and defence. He, therefore, bestows it; and waits, with much kindness

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kindness and patience, over the whole progression, till it hath answered his original design, and is ripe unto perfection. He does not permit the pestilent weeds of sin to contaminate or stifle it; nor even (what would sometimes be the case) some greater and more advanced plant to overgrow and hurt it; but he transplants it when necessary, or makes room for its increase, according to his own purpose, or the proper occasion and place allotted to it.

As his air, or spirit, gives life, and maintains life, in every plant of his field or garden; fo his light of righteoufness, freely shining, covers every leaf and every flower with his gracious splendor. According to the just remark of a learned and ingenious author; "There is one very confiderable circumstance, common to the clothing of a flower and to the righteoufness fignified by it—that both are equally the work or gift of God. It is God that clothes the grass of the field with such beauty; and it is God that giveth to his people the far more lasting ornaments of grace and fanctification. Man, with his utmost skill, can never weave fuch delicate embroidery, as we find in one fingle leaf of an ordinary flower; and no works or merits of man, with all his toil and spinning, can compose that robe of righteousness, without which we must not hope to appear in the presence of God \*."

<sup>\*</sup> Jones's free inquiry into the signification of the Spring. p. 14.

All is of free grace and unmerited bounty, from beginning to end; and all is complete, because it is the energy of HIM, whose work is, unimpeachably, perfect.

The maturity and worth of the fruit too are all his own. His gracious heat perfects the life and fweetness, of what his air and light maintain and beautify. The productions may differ in size, or excellence, or utility: but the difference is ordained by him, who best knows the end for which he made the whole. The sanctification, as well as the justification, of his people, is, entirely, by himself through his Spirit: it is all his own workmanship; his own husbandry: and he, who hath told us this, hath also told us, that it is all for his own glory. Here then,

Where reason fails, with all her powers, True faith prevails, and love adores.

Though there are undoubtedly great differences in the kinds of trees and plants, not only in the natural but also in this spiritual garden; yet the stateliest cedars and the lowliest shrubs are respectively arranged in their proper places, by the Great Husbandman, throughout the whole plantation. On account of the eminence of these cedars, both as to their own growth and local situation, the church, in the Old Testament, was frequently denoted by the name of Lebanon; the mountain, on which they remarkably

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markably grew. Thus Moses prayed to God; Let me fee that goodly mountain, and Lebanon \*; meaning the high and full establishment of the church. So David describes the chosen people; the trees of the Lord are full of fap, the cedars of Lebanon, which he hath planted +. What this fap, and this Lebanon, mean, may be feen in other places. I will fatiate the foul of the priests with fatness, and my people shall be fatisfied with my goodness, faith the Lord t .-The people, which thou hast purchased-Thou shalt bring them in, and plant them in the mountain of thine inheritance; in the place, O LORD, which thou hast made for thee to dwell in the place peculiar or appointed for thy rest], in the fanctuary, O LORD, which thy hands have eftablished §. Thus, the nutrition of these spiritual trees

\* Deut. i i. 25. + Pf. civ. 16. § Exod. xv. 17. with jer. xxxi. 4. Heb. iv. 9. Jer. xvii. 12. John xiv. 2. All the names given to the REST, which remaineth for the people of God, are calculated to lead up our thoughts from the earth, and to make us recollect that we should walk as strangers and pilgrims upon it. Thus, it is named one, the height; to definguish it from our present groveling fituation: מקום, or מכון, a place, peculiar or established; because, out of it, there is nothing but an unsettled void, or outer darkness, for guil y pirits and guilty men: מקרש, a fanctuary, a feparation of existence from all im. purity where God vouchtafes his immediate prefence. שבת, a rest or sabbath, because here only can men find peace to their foul, and a rest from all the labors or forrows occasioned by fin. It is also called a tabernacle, a Shelter,

appears to be wholly from the Lord; and their final destination, under the type of this mountain of cedars, to be the everlasting mountain of God's holiness, or heaven. There are many texts, which thus figuratively make use of Lebanon, so called from its whiteness, the snow almost always remaining upon it: and this whiteness, again, hath been symbolically applied to the people of God, as denoting their purity through the forgiveness of their fins. Thus, though your fins be as fearlet, they shall be as white as snow. -Wash me, and I shall be whiter than snow. In a word, this figure of Lebanon and its cedars, hath been aptly and graciously used, by the Holy Spirit, for the fake of the Israelites especially under the Old Testament, by whom, as a circumstance close at their doors, it was well understood, and by them and all other believers must be known to fignify, the spotless purity bestowed upon God's chosen people, their present superiority of life and affections to the world, and their future eminence in the state of glory.

a shelter, a hiding-place, a temple, a city, a mountain, and by other fignificant names; in order to shew us, where our true home, our only secure and eternal abode, is; and that, in aspiring to this grand perfection of our being and place of our rest, we should learn to hold, in their proper value, all things here below in our way to it, and at a cheap rate especially all that would hinder or keep us from it.

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But though the trees of the Lord's planting, when compared one with another, are not all cedars, vet they are all equally his own trees; and the lowest and the meanest, to man's eye, may be the most useful and most fruitful. The towering plants may refemble those of the Lord's people, who appear high in the temporal church, through their peculiar fituation, their fuperior talents, or fome speculative sublimity of mind. But persons of this fort, as experience shews, are, however ornamental and pleasing they may feem to the eye of fense, not always so productive of goodness or spiritual utility, as some others, who may have a lefs aspiring growth and aim to flourish nearer to the ground. The helpless vine, which cannot rife at all without a prop, bears fomething to make glad the heart, which is looked for in vain from the oak, the cedar, or the fir. These indeed may be made instruments of aid to its feeble branches, and thereby gives a leffon of the mutual affistance which should be found among Christians; but, in real value, however fuperior in appearance, they are much beneath this humble tree, as well as many other fruit-bearing shrubs, which feebly, or rarely, rife above the foil. Analogous to this natural fact, we may fometimes fee a few Christians, fcattered here and there on the earth, who are low in intellectual attainments, void of every talent which can attract or captivate others, humble in life, little de in profession, who think meanly of themselves, and perhaps are thought nothing of by others; but who are rich and Arong in faith, abstracted in spirit from the world, simple in their views and affections towards Christ, heartily devoted and desirous to be wholly refigned to his will, and bringing forth the fweetest fruits of grace, in much meekness, patience, and genuine humility, to his glory. Now, though fuch as these do certainly make but a mean figure in the world, and perhaps no great shew among real Christians themselves; yet, praised be the free grace of the most High, each of these may confidently say, with the prophet; Surely, my judgement is with the Lord, and my work with my God \*. Or if, according to Jotham's parable, a fuperiority of rank or confideration were proposed to one of these small and lowly vines, it might well answer; Should I leave my wine, which cheareth God and man, and go to be promoted over the trees +? It would be no gainer by the exchange. Perhaps, a loser; for the higher the flation, the more exposed it is, as well in the church as in the world, and in grace as much as in nature. To gain credit among mortals, at the expence of spiritual pursuits or spiritual peace, would be but a poor business at the best, and probably would lead to a forry account at the last. Let the humble

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<sup>\*</sup> Ha. xlix. 4. † Judg. ix. 13. R 2 believer,

believer, then, rejoice in his mean condition and frames more than in any aspiring thoughts; always remembering, who it is that hath faid, He that walketh humbly, walketh furely. He is perhaps preferved in this way from a multitude of dangerous temptations, which men of another disposition or station are continually exposed to, and will never regret in the end the lowliness of his walk or mind, fince, possibly, he might otherwise have had occasion (as fome have had) for many and grievous perturbations. However, respecting all circumstances of time or temporal acquirements, every wife and gracious heart will have been taught, that God hath appointed to each believer his own place and talents, that these are the best for him that he could possibly have, and that by thefe, whatever they may be, it is his happiness and duty to honor God and to profit men.

Let the oak, then, be fatisfied with the firmness, which God hath bestowed upon it; the cedar, with its wide-spreading branches, and height; the fir, with its beautiful growth; the palm, with its rising vigor against oppression; and all the other trees of the wood or plantation, with their respective state-liness or figure; but let the vine, creeping as it grows, rejoice too in the hand, which hath created its delicious fruit; the rose be thankful for its fragrant bloom; and every humbler tree and shrub,

for each peculiar production, which the Lord hath affigned; for they can fuitably bear no other, and, in bearing this, they shew forth his munificence and praise. As the diversity and arrangement of plants, with their various fruits, figures, and foliage, crown the whole scene with beauty, and give a rich accordance or enlivening contrast to each other, filling the eye and the heart with food and gladness; so should believers live, and help, and beautify, each other; ever remembering, that they all together form one harmonious temple, which is God's building, and one well-disposed garden, which is God's husbandry.

Lastly. It is God's right hand, which hath planted his vineyard, and made the Branch, the principal Branch [13, the Son of his love], strong for himfelf\*.—This grand truth yields the most charming consolation to the people of God. The foundation of their most lasting hope is laid in the faithful omnipotence of Jehovah, who hath raised up Christ as the Head over all things to his church, and taken his human nature into that fulness, which filleth all in all. Of course, all things promised in the covenant and word of the Most High, and performed or purchased by the Redeemer, are secured to every one, of every age, profession, or nation, that are and shall be found in him. The whole multitude of

<sup>\*</sup> Pf. lxxx. 15. with verse 17.

infants from the beginning of the world, with an immense number of souls, who had not the ordinary means of grace, but whom grace fecretly quickened amidst the obscurities of dark times or of erroneous professions, and among people too not greater idolaters to fin and the world than the vaft bulk of those now usually called Christians; probably these, and thousands and tens of thousands of other hidden ones, shall find their place in the Lord's spiritual Eden, through the Redeemer's merits, and join the more known and more perfectly instructed believers, in giving thanks for the operation of his hands. Certainly, all that are faved, of every age and every tongue, shall agree, without one diffenting voice among them, to afcribe their falvation, with bleffing, and honor, and glory, and power, unto HIM that fitteth upon the throne, and unto the LAMB for ever and ever. They will all rejoice to acknowledge, that their redemption was to them most gratuitously free, that the whole defign of it was planned by the TRIUNE JEHOVAH, that the whole preparation was by the blood and righteousness of the God-MAN, and the whole accomplishment by the power of God THE SPIRIT. This will be their united confession of praise: and their praise, as well as the cause of it, never shall end.

See, then, my fellow Christian, thy privilege and thy portion. Thou art a tree of the Lord's planting,

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that he may be glorified, and that thou mightest bear fruit here, and be blessed hereafter. His church is his garden; this garden is enclosed, inaccessibly enclosed, against the powers of evil; thou, even thou, art in it; nor shalt thou ever be removed from thine appointed portion. God will not take thee from it; and the creatures cannot.

It is at once thy duty and thine interest, then, to bring forth fruit, and much fruit, to his praife; and it is thy comfort to be affured by the Lord of the vineyard, that thy fruit shall remain, and that not the least fragment of his goodness, bestowed upon thee, or wrought in thee, shall ever be loft. Thou wert taken out of the waste by his own will and by the word of truth \*, though nothing better in thyself than the rest of the plants around thee. The selection, O remember it with gratitude, was not in thee, but in him +. If he had not loved thee before all time, he could not afterwards have fet his heart upon thee; for from an infant thou wert, before him, a finner both in nature and practice, and hadst not one previous good disposition towards him. Yea, before thou wert born, guilt was upon thee; for, with the Pfalmist, thou mayest say, behold, mark it well, I was shapen in iniquity, and in sin did my mother conceive me. Again, Thine eyes (O Lord) did see my

<sup>\*</sup> James i. 18. † John xv. 16.

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substance yet being imperfect, and in thy book the book and covenant of life] all my members were written, which in continuance were fashioned, when as yet there was none of them. He loved thee, indeed, before all time, with an everlasting love, and THERE-FORE it was, that with loving kindness he hath drawn thee. He, and he only, drew thee out of thy former miserable state, and established thee in his vineyard, his plantation, his field, his garden: and as to all thy fins, they shall be as none; they shall not be found; for the LORD hath expressly said, I will pardon them whom I referve \*. O feek, then, to shew, how truly thou belongest to him, by thy love towards himfelf, by thy likeness in temper and conduct to thy Saviour's holy pattern, by care and affection to the persons and things which belong to him, and by patience and benevolence in general towards all the others about thee. Convince the oppofers of that free grace and mercy which thou hast tasted, that the firm belief of thy heavenly Father's particular mercy, doth not fpring from pride of heart in thyfelf, or from fourness of disposition towards other men (as they are fond to suppose); but from the fweetest submission and obedience to his will and word, and from the most humbling convictions of thy own unworthiness and turpitude. Let thy forbearance, meekness, and good-will demonstrate, who and what it is thou art striving to follow, and that thou art ready to join in heart, as well as tongue, the noble confession of that blessed seed, who sang; Not unto us, O LORD, not unto us, but unto thy name give glory, for thy mercy, and for thy truth's sake.

With respect to thy brethren in the world, thou wilt have many, and perhaps conftant, calls upon thy heart, for that charity, which suffereth long and is kind; which envieth not; which vaunteth not itself, is not puffed up, doth not behave itself unseemly, seeketh not her own, is not easily provoked, thinketh no evil, rejoiceth not in iniquity, but rejoiceth in the truth; which beareth all things, hopeth all things, endureth all things. Many of the children of God are untkilful children in the word and way of righteousness, and, through natural infirmity do often fall into petulance or frowardness. But, if thou art a young man, or a father, in Christ; wilt thou strike them, as it were, with a club; or wilt thou not rather use thy superior wisdom and strength, to set them right in the course of their holy profession? And if thou canst not accomplish this, through their obstinacy or their ignorance; yet, thou canft leave them with mildness to their Father and thine, and canst put up many a kind petition in their behalf. These may possibly be heard for them; but, at all events, shall certainly not be forgotten for thee. If thy prayer be heard, thou gainest thy brethren; or, if not, thou wilt find an increasing faith and patience for thine own foul.

Bleffed be God! foon shall these disturbances and infirmities cease, and his holy name be magnified, by all his redeemed, in the fullest harmony and most perfect love. Then, if regret can enter heaven, many of the faithful will look back with concernupon the petty feuds and debates, which divided them here, and will rejoice to embrace those, with the tenderest affection, whom perhaps they could fcarce endure to meet, or at least could not think well of below. Their differences will then be all at an end, and buried (as they deferve) in everlafting oblivion. Filial leve to God in Christ, and fraternal love to each other, will give a perfect emphasis to their united blifs, will heighten the fweet melody of the heavenly choir, and fill every faint and every fpirit with the sublimest joy. O happy consummation of the being of the redeemed! how delightful to anticipate this, in faithful expectation! But how much more delightful, to possess and know !- Thanks be to God; the hour shall shortly come, when this corruptible shall put on incorruption, and this mortal shall be clothed with immortality; when every believing eye shall see the glorious Jesus as he is, and when every Christian indeed shall be for ever like unto bim.

O blissful dawn of endless day, When sin shall cease and death shall die; When Christ his glory shall display And beam upon my longing eye!

Then, then, my God, this foul of mine, Bought, dearly bought, and made thine own, In thy bright righteourners shall shine, And claim a portion near thy throne.

Then, rapt in everlasting joy, Midst heav'n's innumerable throng, Thy love shall all my pow'rs employ, And be the theme of ev'ry song.

## WATERED.

This term, like the preceding, implies the continual nourishment and sustenance, derived to the church, from him who is the supporter and head of it. He himself is the bread of life; and from him slows the water of life, or the Holy Spirit, which saturates and replenishes the soul.

The application of water to washing or purification relates to another act of the divine agency in believers: and, though all the effects proper to falvation are inseparable from each other, and must more

or less be found in one and the same subject; yet they may and ought to be considered distinctly for our better comprehension; and therefore this idea of fanctification, under the image of cleansing water, will be found treated of under another name.

When Ifrael came out of Egypt, they travelled three days into the wilderness, and found no water. They afterwards came to the bitter waters, which were miraculously made fweet; and from thence to twelve wells of water at Elim, where also were feventy palm trees. After leaving these in their progrefs, they were fupplied with manna from above, and then again were fainting and falling under the want of water in Rephidim. Here they tried the Lord and his truth, who relieved them with water out of the stony rock, which followed them afterwards; and therefore the name of the place was called Massah or Temptation, and Meribah or Strife \*. When the Lord brought them forth out of Egypt, he did not immediately bring them into the land of promife, but led them through a great and terrible wilderness, wherein were fiery serpents, and scorpions, and drought, where there was no water-that he might hum! Is them, and prove them, and do them good at their latter end; and that they might not presume to fay, that their power and the might of their hand had

<sup>\*</sup> Exod. xvii. 7.

gotten them their wealth \*. All these things tried them indeed, as we may read in the history of this prophetic event; and those, who had no faith, lest their carcases in the wilderness, and entered not into rest. Their enemies, doubtless, who observed them through their course, and who heard, it appears, of their destination, jeered at their apparent distress †, at the strange and to them unaccountable march of the people hither and thither so contrary to the ordinary methods of human reason and resolution, and at the very tedious progression of so many years for the accomplishment of a purpose, which might have been obtained in less than so many days. All this was matter of severe probation on one side, and of surprise or derision on the other.

But this was also prophetic or descriptive of the spiritual progression of the church of God through the world, which is a wilderness between them and their heavenly *Canaan*: and a terrible wilderness it frequently is, and hath been, to the strangers and passengers through it.

When these have been rescued from the spiritual Egypt and Pharaoh, from the bondage of corruption and slavery of the prince of darkness; though at first they are enabled to rejoice in the sense of their deliverance, their faith is afterwards to be tried; and

<sup>\*</sup> Deut. viii. 15, &c. + Exod. xiv. 3.

full proof is frequently to be made, that it is a true faith, and that all the deeds of it are wrought in God. Under this trial, the mere professor sinks. Like the faithless among the Israelites, he is for returning again into Egypt; and recollects his former fleshpots, and his bread to the full\*. Like Esau, he prefers a morsel of meat to the blessing and the birthright of God's children.

The real Christian is annoyed with thirst after happiness, as well as others, in this dreary world; but he thirsteth for it in God, and seeketh for the happiness which cometh from him. His language is, O God, thou art my God, early will I feek thee: my foul thirsteth for thee, my flesh longeth for thee in a dry and thirsty land, where no water is +. And the Lord supplies his thirst in due time. He may cause him to wait, but he shall not want. When his faith holds the faster for the trial and under it, then comes either fit relief or more ftrength: and then the bitterness itself is turned into joy. He leadeth them beside the still waters, affording the calmness of peace, or to living fountains of living waters, yielding life and abundant replenishment; or he turneth the flint itself into a fountain of water for unexpected relief. Christ appears as the smitten rock, pouring forth a flood of confolation and joy,

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<sup>\*</sup> Exod. xvi. 3-

which follows his people through the wilderness. The fiery ferpents, the scorpions, and the drought, shall not hurt them, nor any other deadly thing; but they are kept by the power of God through faith unto falvation. The valley of Baca itself, the valley of humiliating perplexities which they pass through below, shall become a well of refreshment; while the rain of heaven filleth the pools \*, and pours in abundant consolation from God. They go from Arength to Arength; every one of them appeareth before God in Zion. Their lowness of circumstances, their out-of-the way course, so different from that of other men, the various and trying providences they meet with in the world, and a thousand other things which feem to mark them out rather as the children of mifery than of mercy; excite the fcoff, the contempt, the detestation, or the persecution, of the rest of mankind. These deride their walking by faith and not by fight, that is, their living in confidence upon the truth and faithfulness of God to his word, instead of depending upon their own reason and strength. They jeer at their trusting God in the dark, and at casting their whole burden upon the Lord. Their reason (and what is so great or convincing to them as their reason?) teaches them to ground all upon feen principles, and to draw all

<sup>\*</sup> Pf. lxxxiv. 6.

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<sup>\*</sup> Exod. xvi. 3+

<sup>†</sup> Pf. lxiii. 1.

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<sup>\*</sup> Pf. lxxxiv. 6.

from what bears a felf-evident demonstration to their fleshly mind; and therefore nothing, in their opinion, can be fo incomprehenfibly stupid, or fo highly prefumptuous, as the rushing on upon no other fecurity than a naked promife, and the giving up the delights of fense, and what all men agree to call fair and great and good, for the expectation of an inheritance in a future world, unfeen, unknown, and (from the very description given of it) altogether unlike to the present. But these things, and many others which worldly men know not of, the children of God must be content to bear, and must continue to bear too with faith and patience, to their journey's end. Then every difficulty shall be removed, every mystery solved, and the whole work of grace and providence in them and for them appear fair and even, yea, the very best that could have been for their fecurity and welfare.

Thus God's church, as a people, are watered and refreshed: and they are also thus nourished and supported, under the idea of a vineyard, a field, or a garden; but this may be referred to our former consideration of those terms. In the mean time, we may reslect, and with thankful joy, at the prospect before us. 'Tis true, we have an unpromising wilderness to go through, and many disagreeable things to encounter in it; but the perspective glass of faith can carry the mental eye beyond them all, and give

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a view, fuch as Moses had from Pisgah, of the beautiful scene behind. The dark shades in front of the picture only serve in truth to heighten the brightness of the lights in the back-ground. Nor should the way, or length of the way, discourage us \*, or its present inexplicable course; for we should remember, that God is our guide, that his eye is ever upon us, that his almighty hand is under us, that he is our provider upon the road, and that he leads us both fafely for our fouls, and as foftly and fweetly as may be, confiftently with our watchfulness and walking towards him. He doth not propose to give us uninterrupted rest in such a country as this; but at the close of our journey, and in his own dwelling, beyond the reach of enemy or distress. Our prefent business is, to walk on and to press forward, trusting in him for all things, and leaving all with refignation to his management and controul. We shall find, that, in this bleffed life and walk of faith, we shall get abundantly from him; that he will never leave us to ourselves, nor forsake us to our enemies; that he will water us every moment, and fupply us constantly with good; and that, though we may feem to wander in the wilderness in a solitary way, yet we shall find that sweet promise very sure; I will bring the blind by a way that they know not, I

<sup>\*</sup> Numb. xxi. 4.

will lead them in paths that they have not known; I will make darkness light before them, and crooked things straight: these things will I do unto them, and not forsake them \*.

Let us remember then the prophet's address to two sorts of persons:—To the first, who have saith, and therefore sear and obey the Lord; and to the others, who reject his counsel, and walk by the light of their own understanding. Who is among you (says he) that feareth the Lord, that obeyeth the voice of his servant, that walketh in darkness, and hath no light? Let him trust in the name of the Lord, and stay upon his God.—Behold, all ye that kindle a fire, that compass yourselves about with sparks: walk in the light of your fire, and in the sparks that ye have kindled. This shall ye have of mine hand, ye shall lie down in sorrow. Isa. 1. 10, 11.

\* Ifa. xlii. 16.

## WITNESSES.

THE testimony of JESUS, is the spirit of prophecy; both the very spirit and design of all divine revelation, and the energy and demonstration of the HOLY SPIRIT, by whom it is imparted.

And, as the thing testified is sanctioned by God the Holy Ghost; so he hath raised up, from age to age, subordinate agents, as personal witnesses to the truth revealed, who should be competent to give a faithful testimony, by knowing, experiencing, enjoying, the thing testified. All their spiritual senses are exercised for this purpose. They have tasted, that the Lord is gracious; they have heard, and seen with their eyes, that truth or life which was from the beginning; they have been enabled to look upon it with the fullest consideration; and their spiritual hands have handled of the word of life, so as to examine it on all sides, and thereby feel the most convincing proof, that the things are true and real, which God hath testified and his word records\*. And in the

<sup>\*</sup> This is, for the most part, the scope and design of the book called the Proverbs, or, as the original word means, the parables, or similitudes; which, under moral ideas and natural objects, relate to the knowledge and experience of the children of God in their passage.

main points of their testimony, in that which constitutes the effence or substance of it, all these witnesses for God have fellowship and do witness with God, in one uniform temper of mind, and in one admirable consent of tongue. Whatever they may differ about in other respects, in one thing they are

passage through the world. Thus, in its proem, to know WISDOM and instruction, and to perceive the words of understanding, is, in New Testament language, to experience CHRIST and his discipline or way of falvation, and to fpread before the eyes of the mind the words, or revelation, of the HOLY SPIRIT. And so further; to receive into the heart the discipline of spiritual understanding, righteousness, and the decree or counsel of God, and his ordinances. To give spiritual skill to the simple, to the young man in Christ experience and discernment. Thus, one made wise, or who hath tasted that the Lord is gracious, will hear indeed and gather spiritual learning, and one of true understanding, taught by the Spirit, shall possess the gracious pledges, or wife counsels, to spread out or discover the hidden sense of a parable, and its fweet eloquence; the words of the wife, and their anig-matical representations. According to the plan of this excellent book, Christ is to be understood generally by wisdom, and the Holy Spirit by understanding: and they are put in opposition to the stranger, or evil spirit, in the strange woman, i. e. in the world and the flosh; whose object is enticement to fin, and whose end is death and hell. Prov. i. 2-6. and vii. 21. 27. The nine first chapters of the book particularly, if read in this point of view, both illustrate and harmonize with the doctrines and experience laid down in the New Teftament, and shew, that the children of God have received the same mind and heart-felt enjoyment of di-vine things, as well before the coming of Christ as afterwards.

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univerfally agreed, that all their falvation proceeds folely and freely from Jesus Christ, through the love and power of the FATHER and HOLY SPIRIT; and that the whole glory of it, both here and hereafter, must be ascribed to this triune Jehovah alone.

Thus, the children of God witness for him in dostrine or principle. They hold all the grand truths of his revelation, without daring to pervert them by corrupt reasonings and carnal speculations. What their heavenly Father hath faid, must be true; is to them an incontrovertible axiom. They fee all the blasphemy and impudence of the devil in every attempt to question it. The WHY and the WHERE-FORE they implicitly and meekly leave to their bleffed Lord; being affured, that HE, who is all goodness and wisdom, can fay nothing but truth, and do nothing but right. And in this lowly way, he teacheth them, far above the skill of man, such delightful realities in his word of grace, that, according to his promise, they KNOW of the doctrine that it is indeed of God, and can be of no other; and, in thus knowing it, they receive the bleffed pledge of an unalienable portion in all they know.

They have, therefore, power to witness for God in their real experience. Their's is not the testimony of a fine-spun theory, excogitated by a shallow and doubting reason; but the assurance of a matter of

fact, of a thing done for them and done in them, which they as perceptibly know and enjoy, as their outward fenses can know and enjoy the light and warmth of the fun, shining with meridian splendor through an unclouded fky. And this vital experience cannot be a delufion, or matter of doubt like the metaphyfical reveries of men, because God hath stated the very nature and manner of it in his word, and at the same time promised to impart it by his Spirit. Christians of all ages, of different languages, and of various countries, have known the fame things in the fame way, and have substantially agreed in their evidence concerning them. So that, to suppose an error here, is both to accuse God of falshood, and to impute an unprofitable deceit to his whole people from the beginning of the world; though, thefe, of all men, have most abhorred deceit, and, in a striking distinction above all, have been called upon, to attest, and even to die, for the truth. Thus, he that believeth, bath the witness in himself; and, also, hath fet to his feal, that God is true.

And, as they own the love and truth of God in their happy experience, so it is their wish and their joy to testify, concerning both him and themselves, in their lives and conversations. And they are ashamed, and entitled to shame, when this is not the case. The true believer, walking as such, can chearfully say with the prophet; I will greatly

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rejoice in the LORD, my foul shall be joyful in my Gon, for he hath clothed me with the garments of falvation, he hath covered (or, furrounded) me with the robe of rightcousness, as a bridegroom decketh bimfelf [mor] decketh as a prieft] with ornaments, and as a bride adorneth herself with her jewels \*. In one view, he is in the Bridegroom Christ, who is covered with majesty and glory; or as a priest under Christ before God, to stand up and worship, or to win others to him; and, in another view, he is in the church, as the bride of Christ, betrothed in an everlasting covenant, according to the emphatic premife by Hofea +. And what are these ornaments and jewels?—Here is an allusion to the peculiar dress of the people of God under the law, and especially to the attire of the high-priest, their representative before the throne. They were to wear frontlets, or phylacteries, &c. for tokens and for figns, which are likewise called ornaments t, or (as the word also means) testimonies, that they might be a memorial of their peculiar condition, and of their interest in God as his own inheritance. The high-priest particularly was to deck himself for his ministry before the Lord [mo, the same word as in the above text of Isaiah] with the glorious and beautiful garments, prescribed in Exod. xxviii. all of which related to

<sup>\*</sup> Ifa. 1xi. 10. † Hof. ii. 19, 20. † Exod. xiii. 16. Deut. vi. 8, &c. Exod. xxxiii. 4.

the perfect falvation of Christ; and were fignificant testimonies of that falvation to his people. Christ was, in this respect, the faithful witness to them of the fure mercies of the everlasting covenant, which the divine persons had entered into before the world began. His redeemed were clothed with thefe garments and jewels in him and by him. They are ornaments or testimonies, first, upon him; but, upon him, only for them. They are also to have their ornaments or testimonies; not of phylacteries, frontlets, or fringes, as under the law; but the testimonies of a holy life and conversation, or (as the apostle expresses it, alluding probably to this very thing) the hidden man of the heart, in that which is not corruptible, even the ornament of a meek and quiet spirit (becoming the bride of Christ) which is in the fight of God of great price \*. They are also to be fruitful in every good word and work to his praise; as branches yielding abundantly in due season. This is binding up, or strengthening, the testimony, and fealing, or confirming, the law in those that are taught of God: in other words, this is to them the demonstration of all divine truth, and the application of all divine promifes, by the Holy Spirit and his power. The bleffed impression is, for an earnest to themselves, upon their hearts; and the happy

\* 1 Pet iii. 4.

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effects appear in their lives, as an unequivocal proof to confirm or confound those about them. These are the incorruptible ornaments, which testify, that they are indeed betrothed to Christ, and that they do really participate the earnest, so much spoken of in the Scriptures, of their adoption and everlasting inheritance. Holiness is the very dress of the people of God, as well as their ornament; and all that are without it, will in the end be considered as naked, or hateful, in his sight. But this holiness is evidently none of their own. It is formed by the God of heaven, and descends from the skies.

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God's children are also witnesses for him in their death. Sometimes they have been called to testify, as (what is commonly understood by the word) martyrs; i. e. as witnesses who loved not their lives unte the death, but fealed their testimony with their blood. Many have been tried in this way; and, antiently at least, it was considered as a distinguished and glorious privilege. The Lord shewed, in great numbers of instances, how he could strengthen his people's faith above the fiercest terrors, with which death could attack them, and make them conquerors, and more than conquerers, over all the united malice of earth and hell. " The noble army of martyrs" could praife him in dungeons, tortures, and flames, unvanquished and unappalled; and, as the world was not worthy of them, neither cared they for the world,

nor for the flights, and fcorns, and inveterate perfecutions, which they found in it. Their Redeemer gave them a greatness and fortitude of mind, which enabled them to look down upon the love or the hatred to be found in this corruptible state, with a glorious indifference, and to be fatisfied with his own will in raising glory from them, whether it was by life or by death \*. But the generality of God's people, and especially in these last days, are not called to this dignified testimony for him. They witness, however, even now, and will continue to witness to the end of the world, that he is faithful and true; that he doth not forfake his own in their needful and trying moments, but yields support according to the occasion or extremity; and that he can and doth supply such consolations, as neither the debility of fickness nor the pangs of death, can either remove or abate. Thousands, and tens of thousands, have been enabled to fing with the pfalmist; my flesh, and my heart, faileth; but God is the strength of my heart, and my portion for ever.

And if God's children can thus witness to his truth and power here, amidst the corruptions of the world, and in a dying frame of clay; O how will they testify, concerning his goodness and his beauty, from the perfect enjoyment of every perfect faculty, in the

<sup>\*</sup> Phil. i. 20.

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bright regions of life immortal! What a day of endloss testimony shall then appear! Praise in perfection; happiness in purity; love unutterable, unabating love, for evermore! What a cloud of witnesses will God's great congregation compose, in the realms of glory! Their number is beyond the reach of number; and their felicity unmeasured by the longest revolutions of time.-We cannot fay, nor even conceive, what will be the methods of illimitable joy. Nor can we apprehend the increasing energies of facultics purely spiritual, unremittingly engaged in that sublime state, which God's magnificent goodness and wisdom have provided for his redeemed. It doth not yet appear, what we shall be. This was the acknowledgment of a disciple, who knew most of the secrets of his Lord, and faw most of the glories of eternity from the confines of time. But we know, however, he adds, that when he (whom another apostle calls OUR LIFE \*) shall appear, we shall be like him; for we shall see him AS HE IS +. Perpetual likeness to Christ will constitute one great subject of perpetual blifs, as well as form the undiminishable capacity to enjoy it.

All this is the purpose and effect of redemption; the very end too, for which the Most High Jehovah framed the world. Nothing else seems worthy either

\* Col iii. 4. † John iii. 2.

of him or his church. Not of Him; because only this eternity of loving-kindness and mercy could difplay the unutterable grandeur of his own infinite perfections: not of his church; because this immortal glory can only fatiate those vehement desires of immortality, which God hath bestowed upon it, hath promifed to fatiate, and certainly bestowed and promised not in vain. He hath given her an heart above the world, which is perifhing; and to love and feek himself for enjoyment in that bright state, which cannot pass away: And can it be imagined, that the God of truth will fail in power to make good his promife, or excite defires only for the more dreadful disappointment? This, indeed, would be rendering his own people of all men the most miserable. Or, for what other end, but this, which God hath declared\*, could the wonderful mechanism of the world be brought into being at all, or be supported from that decay, which, we know, is inherent to matter? There is confessedly no other end, but this one, which hath not upon it the humbling motto, written in a character too universal and too plain to be mistaken-all is vanity. The WORD of the LORD only, with the objects interested in, or connected with it, endureth for ever.

We may, then, subscribe, though in a better sense,

<sup>\*</sup> Comp. John i. 3. Col. i. 16, 17, 18. Eph. iii. 9-11.

the much-admired lines of a heathen poet, who fang more than he properly knew, and knew more than he could truly perform:

Felix, qui potuit rerum cognoscere causas, Atque metus omnes, et inexorabile fatum, Subjecit pedibus, strepitumque Acherontis avari.

These a Christian may render:

Happy the man, who understands the cause
Of God's great system in its various laws;
Who, o'er the sears which this sad world can bring,
And over death's inexorable sting,
And hell's in atiate rage, as vanquish'd soes, can

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## PRESERVED.

This term implies an immense portion of comfort for the children of God; because it represents them, in its radical sense, as observed, defended, protected, shut up, and saved in Christ, as a precious depositum in a strong tower or city, which omnipotence itself is pledged to guard and support.

They are preserved in body by their Lord and Saviour, who orders all their times and circumstances,

and who makes every thing, even contrary things, work together for their good. Their faculties, opportunities, and affairs, are all measured out by him, and all employed in that situation of life, which he knows to be best for them and most for his own glory. Their forrows, mistakes, sicknesses, and lastly death itself, which are evils that consume the heart (as it were) of worldly men, he enables them to sustain or improve to their real advantage.

They are preserved in soul by their gracious Redeemer. He bought them with his own blood for this end; he regenerated them by his own Spirit to prepare them for the reception of his love and mercy; and, by the same Spirit, he trains them up and sanctifies them for the full and everlasting enjoyment of his heavenly kingdom. They are the holy people, the redeemed of Jehovah; and are called, Sought out, a city not for saken: and thus do they become the true Nazarenes, through Christ the was, the Nazarene, the branch, the keeper; and, according to their name, are kept, or defended, by him through faith unto salvation\*.

Thus they are preferved and spiritually shut up, as a garden inclosed, as a field recovered from the

<sup>\*</sup> Isa. xxvii. 3. I Pet. i. 5. They are also the real Nazarites, who drink no wine or strong drink, in the sense of Rev. xviii. 3. but are kept fober, unintoxicated, and unstotted, in the world.

waste, as an holy and impregnable fortification, as the facred peculium of God, which he will suffer no enemy to touch but as the apple of his eye.

When Noah had entered into the ark, by God's command, we are told immediately, that the LORD shut him in \*. He was under the divine guidance and protection, during the time of a most tremendous desolation: and though he seemed, as it were, put out of sight and shut up as in a prison, the Lord had his eye ever upon him and his, and made them a new seed to come forth in due time and replenish the world.

When the children of Israel, as the figure of the chosen remnant, were to be fignally preserved, while the Lord poured forth his destruction upon the first-born of Egypt; it was expressly enjoined, that none of them should go out of the door of his house till the morning +.. They were hidden or shut up, till the indignation was overpast, typisying this great spiritual truth to the children of God, who are his preserved for ever, that they are kept separate from the world, under the propitiation of Christ, and delivered by him, till the great morning shall appear,

<sup>\*</sup> Gen. vii. 16.

<sup>†</sup> Exod. xii. 22, 23. The same idea is intended by the Lord's encamping, or being a wall of fire, around his people. Their security is in his defence. This was signified to Jacob, at a trying time, in Gen. xxxii. 2. See also Zech. ix. 8. ii. 5. Ps. cxxv. 2.

when the Sun of righteousness will shine forth in all his glory. The history of the deliverance of Rahab and her family, by the fcarlet thread and by confinement to the house, preached this important doctrine of salvation only in and by the future Redeemer.

The same idea was exhibited by the ark of the covenant, into which God's people entered by faith, like David, as into the secret of his tabernacle, which not even David, nor any other man while in the sless, could corporally enter; where they were hidden, and protected under the wings \* of the cherubim, covering them and the mercy-seat over them, with infinite love and complacency.

The prophet Isaiah was directed to hold, in the Lord's name, the same language. Come, my people, enter thou into thy chambers, and shut thy doors about thee: hide thyself as it were for a little moment, until the indignation be overpast: for behold, the Lord cometh out of his place to punish the inhabitants of the earth for their iniquity: the earth also shall disclose her blood, and shall no more cover her slain +. What this safe refuge is, the same prophet tells us in another place: Thou (Jehovah) hast been a strength to the poor, a strength to the needy in his distress, a refuge from the storm, a shadow from the heat, when

<sup>\*</sup> See Pf. xvii. 8. lvii. 1. lxi. 4. xci. 4.

<sup>†</sup> Isa. xxvi. 20, 21.

the blast of the terrible ones is as a storm against the wall \*.

This is the bleffed privilege of those, who are fantified by God the Father, and preferved in Christ Jesus, and called +. OF ALL, WHICH the Father HATH GIVEN HIM, it will be known for an everlafting truth, that HE HATH LOST NOTHING, but that he hath kept them through his own name or power, that they might be made perfect in one for glory and falvation. The Father's love hath feparated them and shut them up from the world by his own eternal purpose; the Son's grace protects them in himself, to whom they are united by his glorious humanity; and the Spirit effectually calls them to this holy fellowship and falvation. This is the method, and these are the means, of all their happiness and glory. They are neither wifer, nor better, nor ftronger, nor lovelier, in themfelves than any others; but they are made, they know not why further than God's word hath explained it, the chosen and faved of the Lord; while the rest of the world, with all the angels who kept not their first effate, are passed over and left in their fins. Our Lord himfelf, even in an address to the Father, where an explanation might have been expected if any where, gives no reason but this; Even for, Father; for so it seemed good in thy fight. The preserved of the Lord are satisfied with this explanation: the people of the

\* Ifa. xxv. 4. S 5 † Jude 1. world,

world, the vain reasoners of mankind, could never upon this point be satisfied with any.

It is evident, then, that this whole matter is entirely of grace. Noah found favor, that is, as the Hebrew word means, free grace; and Abraham; and Jacob above his brother; and the children of Ifrael; and Rahab; and the Virgin Mary; and the redeemed in all ages; or they had never been more than vile, helplefs, miferable finners. It was God, who made them to differ; and, if we could hear them all speak, every one would confess with the apostle; By the grace of God, I am what I am.

And this, O believer, I am very fure, is thy heart felt confession. Thou hast nothing to say for thyself, but, "thus it hath pleased the Lord;" it is all "his doing," and "it is marvellous in my eyes."

Thus grace begins the good work in the foul, carries it on, and completes it for the day of the Lord Jesus. Not one of all the redeemed stands, by his own strength, or upon his own soundation. Lest to themselves, the most fervent and lively would foon grow cold and dead: united to Christ, the bruised reed receives omnipotent might, and the lowest and the least are eternally safe.

What inexpressible consolation, then, doth not this title afford to the afflicted Christian? Brother, thou mayest be, though not very likely, as outwardly wretched as Lazarus; thou mayest, though not very probably, be brought for Christ's sake to the trial

of cruel mockings and scourgings, yea, moreover, of bonds and imprisonment. Nay, suppose thou wert called, as many bleffed ones have been, to be floned, or fawn afunder, or tempted, or flain with the sword; to wander about in sheep-skins and goat-skins, being destitute, afflicted, tormented: suppose all this and much more, which have not been suppositions but great realities in former days; still remember, as they did, that thou art notwithstanding the PRESERVED of the LORD, and that neither men nor devils can. touch one hair of thy head, without his permission. and knowledge. When he suffers their malice to operate, thou art fafe in his hand, beyond the reach of their's to injure thee really, and much less to destroy... Thou mayest sing the xlvith Psalm in defiance of them all. Thou mayeft plead God's own promise, in the waters, in the river, and in the fire \*; and he will make it perfectly good. Yea, thou mayest rife up to the apostle's challenge, and fear no excess or bravado; who, who, who, can oppose, or accuse, or condemn, or separate? Not death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor height, nor depth, NOR ANY OTHER CREATURE. - Let the redeemed, and preferved, of the Lord fay fo, whom he bath redeemed from the hand of the enemy +; for he is good and his mercy endureth for ever. Do thou

> \* Isa. xliii. 1, 2. + Ps. cvii. 2. See also Isa. liv. 10.

fay this also, my brother in the kingdom and patience of Jesus Christ; and surely thou shalt find the truth of God no truer to others than it will be to thee. Stay thyself upon him, who is faithfulness itself; cast thy burden upon him, who hath promised to sustain thee; rest in patience upon his love and time; leave all the management and event in his hands; and, surely, thou shalt one day have cause to say, " I never sought his sace in vain; nor hath any thing sailed of all that he engaged in his word to perform, either for my body or my soul."

## GLORIFIED.

When I began these humble attempts, I purposed to treat of several other titular descriptions of the church, besides those which I have now submitted to the reader's candor and judgement; such as, friends, and erethren, of Christ; jewels, or precious stones; lights; stars; eride; flock; sealed; spiritual Hebrews, Jews, Israelites; soldiers of Christ; meek; remnant; vessels of mercy; disciples; &c. but the consideration of swelling the volume so as to render it expensive to the poor, and the hope that what hath been put down may suffice to shew, that the names, which

God hath given to his people, are not names of emptiness, but have some great precise and leading truth or doctrine contained in them; have deterred me from a further prosecution of the subject. I will therefore conclude the whole with a title, under which the faith and hope of the children of God are concluded, and which implies the end and consummation of their very being.

The title GLORIFIED denotes the completion of all the purposes and work of God in and for the Christian, and the final accomplishment of all his own views and expectations.

The word GLORY fignifies weight and folidity, and is opposed to all that is frivolous, empty, or unsubstantial. It conveys the idea, therefore, of what is perfectly valuable and unchangeably lasting. Applying, then, the term glorified (as the Holy Spirit applies it) to the children of God, it denotes them precious in his fight who made them such, and perfect and happy in themselves without mutation and without end.

There is a purpose of God according to election, which must stand \*; and this purpose, defined particularly in every endearing name, by which he calls them, and many of which it has been the purpose of this treatise to consider in that view, is generally marked out by that noble deduction, which the apostle makes in the epistle to the Romans. Speak-

ing of this purpose, he says; Whom God did fore-know, he also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of his Son, that he might be the sirst-born among many brethren. Moreover, whom he did predestinate, them he also called; and, whom he called, them he also justified; and, whom he justified, them he also GLORIFIED. What shall we then say to these things \*? Who, that desires not to be found a liar +, shall dare to contradict, what God afferts to be true?

What the state of glory is, and consequently what it is to be glorified; we cannot fully conceive in this world. We know it, at most, by hints or glimpses from the word and Spirit of God in some favoured moments; and what we do know, and hath been known, in this state (even by an highly favoured apostle) ‡ rather leads to a contemplation inexpressible, than warrants an attempt to express it.

<sup>\*</sup> Rom. viii. 28—31. † Rom. iii. 4.

t 2 Cor. xii. 2. St. Paul says, that he was caught up (in spirit) to the third heaven—to paradise, and heard unspeakable words, which it is not lawful, or possible, for a man to utter. This way heavens of heavens, of which the sensible way are the figure or type, denote the supreme state, or immediate knowledge of and communion with Jehovah; and therefore it is probably called the third heaven, not only eminentiae gratia, but because in that state Jehovah is intimately known (as far as the intellect of creatures can know him) in his three persons, the undivided trinity in persect unity. The apostle probably had such an astonishing view of this glory, as almost overwhelmed him. So had others: Exod. iii. 6. Isa. vi. 2. Rev, i. 17.

All that is rich, fublime, holy, delightful, perfect, aweful, and magnificent, concurs to form a fort of aggregate idea; and when this is infufficient, or when we are fure, that all our conception is exceffively beneath the unutterable grandeur of the thing, we are obliged, through the poverty of our best thoughts and words, to employ negatives, in order to raife up our hearts and understandings a little higher in this fweet and fublime expatiation. We fay, it is unutterable, unlimitable, unimpeachable, undefilable, inconceivable; and when we fay all this, we proclaim our own unworthiness and ignorance of that transcendent bliss, which no mortal eye hath. feen, nor ear heard, nor entered into the heart of man fully to conceive. We are fure, that it is a folid and enduring state or substance, not affected by the flux of time or revolution of circumstances, and therefore often shadowed forth under the notion of fitting and rest-fitting on thrones, as triumphant kings; resting in permanent and unchangeable glory, as having attained the accomplishment of God's purpose and the end of their own being. No compass of thought, no greatness of mind, either in earth or heaven, can arrive at more than a very feeble and faint conception of this true fublime. " Itself (as one says of it) is its own hyperbole;" for raise hyperbole upon hyperbole, with the apostle, language labors and is lost in the rising transcendency of the still exceeding and eternal weight of glory. Like untutored babes, we may stammer and lisp about it here; but our highest words cannot explain the lowest ray of the indescribable majesty of that state and perfection, in which the redeemed of the LORD are appointed to live with him for ever and ever.

Upon this superlative subject, it may, however, not be improper to set down a few passages of scripture for the pious reader's devout and happy meditation, and with them conclude our attempts to enlarge upon an inestable theme, which surpasses, while it gladdens and employs, the purified and perspicuous intellect of the most exalted spirits, in the regions of light eternal.

This consummate state is called by the prophet, A glorious high throne from the beginning, the place of our fanctuary \*: or, as it might more truly be rendered, "The throne of glory, the height from the beginning [i. e. Christ, who is the beginning, the first and the last, in whom also his people were chosen from the beginning and before all worlds] is the place of our sanctuary." Upon the removal of the ark of the covenant, which symbolized God in Christ, and Christ in his people, and was the reprefentative throne of glory and "the very life and souli" of the whole Jewish dispensation; and upon the abolition of all other types and shadows; it is said, At that time they shall call Jerusalem [meaning the

spiritual city and people of God] the throne of JE-HOVAH, and all nations [Gentiles as well as Jews] shall be gathered unto it-But I faid, how shall I put thee [the heathen] among the children, and give thee the land of defire, and the heritage of glory, O bosts of the nations! And he said, Thou shalt call me, MY FATHER; and thou shalt not turn away from after me \*. So, in the confummation of all things, the temple of God will be opened in heaven, and there will be feen in his temple the ark of his testament; that is, the completion of the church of God in glory, as his own habitation through the Spirit +. The Lord raiseth up the poor out of the dust, and lifteth up the beggar from the dunghill [and fuch are all his people, and fuch their condition, by nature] to fet them among princes, and to make them inherit [to give them the right of heirskip to] the throne of glory t. And above the firmament, that was over their heads, was the likeness of a throne, as the appearance of a sapphire-stone, and upon the likeness of the throne was the likenefs as the appearance of a man [Christ] above upon it §. Thy throne, O God, [Christ] is for ever and ever: a sceptre of rectitude, or making right, is the sceptre of thy kingdom |. What are thefe, who are arrayed in white robes? and whence came they? And I faid unto him, my

<sup>\*</sup> Jer. iii. 16---19. † Rev. xi. 19. † 1 Sam. ii. 8. § Ezek. i. 26. | Pf. xlv. 6. Heb. i. 8.

Lord, thou knowest. And he said to me, These are they, who came out of great tribulation, and have washed their robes, and made them white in the blood of the Lamb. Therefore are they before the throne of God, and worship him day and night in his temple; and he, that fitteth upon the throne, shall dwell, or tabernacle, among them \*. To him, that overcometh, will I grant to sit with me in my throne, even as I also overcame, and am set down with my Father in his throne +. And he shewed me the pure river of water of life, clear as crystal [the emblem of the Holy Spirit] proceeding out of the throne of God and of the Lamb t. That is; he was shewed the confummation of the work and glory of the three perfons in Jehovah, concerning their covenant of redemption. To this same purpose Ezekiel, chap. xivii. The waters iffued from under the door of the house, v. I. The Spirit came from Christ and by him to his people. And it shall be, that every living foul, which moveth, for every one of whom the river shall come there, shall live: and there shall be a very great multitude of fish, because these waters shall come thither; for they shall be healed, and every one shall live whither the river cometh. The Spirit of God quickens the fouls of his people, and was given for that end; and these shall be a very great

multitude,

<sup>‡</sup> Rev. xxii. 1. Rev. iii. 21. \* Rev. vii. 13---15.

multitude, according to Luke v. 6-10. And it shall be, that the fishers shall stand upon it [the ministers of the word shall stand by or in the Spirit of the word] from En-gedi even to En-eglaim. [from the fountain of the kid to the fountain of the calves. i. e. from conducting finners to the facrifice for fin and its consequent pardon, to the facrifice of thanksgivings and its effects in the communion of joy] there shall be a spreading forth of nets [a great promulgation of the gospel] their fish shall be according to its kind, or of every kind [fome of all nations] as the fish of the great sea, exceeding many. But the miry places thereof the wicked, who cast out mire and dirt] and the marshy places thereof [the carnal professor, who stagnates under the living water] shall not be healed; they shall be given to falt, or the curfe. And upon the river, upon the banks. thereof, shall rife up hither and thither every tree for food: its leaf shall not fade, neither shall its fruit fail: it shall bring forth its first-fruits for its months [fruit shall continually be renewed for the divine praise] because its waters, even they, sprang from out of the fanctuary; and its fruit shall be for food, and its leaf for medicine .- So CHRIST himfelf: the GLO-RY, which thou gavest me, I have given them; that they may be one even as we are one. I in them, and thou in me, that they may be made perfect, or be confummated, in one. Father, I will, that they also, whom

whom thou hast given me, be with me where I am; that they may behold my glory \*.—We all (says the apostle) with open face, beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image, from glory to glory, even as by the Lord the Spirit †.

To Christ coming, as unto a living stone—ye also, as lively stones, are built up a spiritual house ‡. In Christ all the building, sitly framed together, groweth unto an holy temple in the Lord; in WHOM ye also are builded together for an HABITATION of GOD through the SPIRIT §.

My Christian brethren, ye see your calling, and the end of it. The calling is of God, in its design and execution; and the end of it is your happiness and complete salvation. You must have seen, that ALL is of grace to you, from its origin or beginning, slowing through every means for accomplishing the divine and benevolent purpose, to its perfect consummation in the realms of glory. Hence it is, that the names and titles, given by God himself to the heirs of promise are almost all of a passive kind, that the activity, and consequently the boasting, of man, in the procurement of this wonderful blessing, might be wholly excluded \(\begin{align\*}\). The law of faith, wherever it prevails, necessarily and invariably excludes this; because faith is that grace and gift of

<sup>\*</sup> John xvii. 22, &c. † 2 Cor. iii. 18. † 1 Pet. ii. 4, 5. § Eph. ii. 21, 22. | Rom. iii. 27. God

God to the foul, which teaches and enables it to look out of itself for every good to another, even to HIM, who fays to all his people; without me ye can do nothing. But if it were of works, as the Spirit of God by the apostle intimates, it would be quite otherwife; for, in that case, man would bave whereof to boalt, and might plead wonderful things in behalf, or as the effect, of his own activity. It is true; that a real believer is active, and privileged to be fo above all other men, who talk and do not, nor can find it in their hearts to do any thing " as God wills it to be done;" but the activity is none of his own: it is the agency of God upon him, making him, first, willing to work, and, then, working in him to accomplish all according to his own good pleasure, and to the praise of the glory of his own grace by Christ Jesus. This is a very different mode of action, both in spirit and design, and leads to very different consequences. Every experienced Christian feels the power of this truth; and none other can rightly understand it.

For the edification and comfort of his redeemed brethren, and for an humble testimony from himself to the truths of God, the author composed these essays, and ventured them into the world. He hath endeavoured to be a faithful witness, and is so far consident of the reality of those things, which he has submitted, that, he hopes, he can say without presumption, fumption, That they are powerful principles by which he now lives in hope and peace, and joyful evidences on which, through mercy, he trufts at last to lay down his head and die. If God's word be true, and there be any meaning in it, he fears no disappointment; but is firmly persuaded, that the great points of salvation, which he hath been laboring to explain and enforce upon others, shall be finally and eternally obtained by himself, though less than the least of all God's mercies, and utterly unworthy of any of them.

He hath been the more inclined to trespass upon the public indulgence, with these essays, from the confideration of the numberless errors and of the great departure from evangelical truth, which appear in these latter days, to the molestation, and in part to the subversion, of the professing Christian world. It is awful to reflect, how men can dare, in this our land especially, to appeal by oaths to the God of truth for their hearty (ex animo) belief of those things, which immediately afterwards they can covertly undermine, or openly and shamelessly declare not to believe. The perjuries, which have been avowedly committed upon this account, are fufficient, both in number and weight, to crush any establishment into ruins. It is not a light thing to depart from principles, authorized and owned of God. The Yewish state and dispensation were not overthrown, but upon the dereliction of those great truths, for which they were raised, and on which they stood. The Arian renunciation of the true doctrine of the Trinity, without which the Christian religion itself cannot stand, brought the overwhelming scourge of the Mahometan insidelity on the once slourishing churches of Asia, which threw them to the ground. And, to add no more, the church of Rome seems verging fast to entire decay, by the suppression of true doctrine, and by the introduction of salse tenets and idle superstitions, equally offensive to common sense and to the beautiful truth and simplicity of the Christian religion.

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But, amidst all the circumstances of outward defolation, there is a confolation for the Christian heart, which can never be taken away: The foundation of God standeth sure; the Lord knoweth them that are his; and they are fafe. When the world itself falls into destruction, these shall be preserved, and shall shine forth in the regions of blis. LORD himself is their keeper now; and their glorifier for evermore.—O what a prospect is this, in the midst of all the darkness of an evil world! what a confummation! what a joy! Life here is nothing in the view, nor all the matters of life. Death vanishes, with his terrors, before the faith and hope of this radiant fcene. Eternity, awful eternity, with all its height and depth, appears only a boundless ocean of liberty,

liberty, light, and love; to which every moment is carrying on the foul, and which the foul is led to pant after, the nearer it approaches, and the more it perceives it.—O my God! what hast thou prepared for them that love thee !- What a covenant manifested, ordered in all things and fure! What a fulfilment effected, arifing in all things beyond the language or the thought of man! How art thou, O FATHER, glorified in thy vast designs of truth and love! how art thou, O bleffed Son, exalted in the rich display of thy mercy and grace! how art thou, O Holy Spirit, triumphantly extolled in the full and perfect completion of all thy wonderful acts in the fouls of men! Thou one adorable Jehovah in three perfons; to thee, to thee, and only to thee, be all the honor and glory, all the dominion and power, all the happiness and mercy, ascribed, world without end!

Let every creature, then, which is in heaven, and on the earth, and under the earth, and such as are in the fea, and all that are in them, say; blessing, and ho nor, and glory, and power, be unto HIM that sitteth upon the throne, and unto the LAMB for ever and ever. Chiefly, let the redeemed of the Lord say so, whom he hath redeemed from the hand of the enemy, and who understand his loving kindness and truth: let them give thanks unto his holy name; for he is good, and doeth good; and his mercy endureth for ever. AMEN.

THE END.

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